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ALLEN PRESCOTT;

OR,

THE FORTUNES OF A NEW-ENGLAND BOY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "MORALS OF PLEASURE," AND
"THE YOUNG EMIGRANTS."

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

BURNS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ALLEN PRESCOTT;

OR,

THE FORTUNES OF A NEW-ENGLAND BOY.

CHAPTER XV.

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the greensward. Good sooth, she is
The queen of curds and cream.—WINTER'S TALE.

THE youthful mind, when the heart is not corrupted, is easily led back to truth and simplicity, and soon renounces its vanity and pretence when brought into collision with those who are unaffected by them.

Charles Davenport, young, rich, and unreflecting, had no vices, but some false opinions. With a not unfrequent inconsistency, while he would have resented a doubt of his patriotism, he cherished anti-American prejudices: among these was

a low estimation of those in the humbler walks of life. Yet he had not been long at Westdale before the desire to astonish subsided into the more amiable wish to please ; and, almost unconscious of the change, he found himself listening with interest to persons and topics that but a short time before he would have turned from with indifference, if not disgust. Not that he would have admitted the renunciation of a single prejudice ; on the contrary, had he been pushed to such an extremity, he would probably have sustained all his previous opinions by his present experience. But nevertheless he was pleased, and for the time being not only happy but better. Nature is the grand restorer ! when the body is enfeebled, we seek her pure air, salubrious streams, and healthful fruits ; when the spirit is sore and weary with the business and tumult of the world, we go for healing and repose to her peaceful shades and tranquillizing pursuits ; and why is she not a safe physician for a sickly taste or the crudities of a youthful judgment ? So at least thought Mr. Wallace ; and when a visit, designed for a short time, was prolonged by the hospitality of Colonel Callender, he heard it with pleasure ; nor was Charles himself disinclined to exchange the dust and dulness of midsummer in the city for the novelty and care-

less freedom of the country. But we are going before our story.

On the first Sunday after Charles's arrival, as he returned from the village church, where he had seen a great part of the population assembled, he expressed his surprise at their generally good appearance, more especially that of the fair choristers.

"Who is the little girl," he continued, "in white, with a straw hat tied with blue ribands?"

"That description applies to so many," replied Miss Callender, "that you must descend to particulars more personal, and such as have not, I dare say, escaped your observation, or I cannot shed any light on the lady. Was she pretty?"

"Yes; but that, like the straw bonnet and blue ribands, from the cursory view I took of her companions, would not distinguish her."

"It may have been Mary Norris, one of the sweetest and best; devoted to all good things, and the pattern-girl of the village."

"No, no," said Charles, laughing, "the girl I mean has enough of 'earth's mortal mould' in her, I'll dare engage, though it may be of the choicest quality."

"Perhaps it was Patty Pearson, then; she, too, is a pretty girl, and quite intelligent,—the counsel-

lor, gossip, and diplomatist of the juvenile corps. The promoter of parties, the importer of fashions, the reporter of news, and the chronicler of scandal,—if there be any stirring.”

“No—no—no—The girl I mean has a face entirely above such commonplace emotions. She has dark sparkling eyes, deeply set beneath a strongly marked brow ; but whether black, blue, or gray, passes my skill to determine ; for though I peeped hard under her bonnet, she dropped their long lashes, evidently on purpose, as a child hides a toy to provoke a search. Then she has the usually received constituents of beauty,—rich glossy hair, a fair smooth forehead, red cheeks, a small mouth, and, to crown all, is, I should guess, not much more than sweet seventeen. Yet she is not handsome—her face is too round, her nose a decided pug, and her under lip has a prominence that nothing could atone for but the arch and dimpling smile, which I believe she exchanged with her companion for no other reason than that she knew I was looking at her.”

“O,” exclaimed Miss Callender, “I have found her out now !—it is my pet, Love Heywood.”

“Your pet ! why, my dear madam, have you not made me acquainted with her ? She is the very thing for a rustic flirtation ! Such fine capa-

bilities, and fresh from the hand of Nature! no city drilling—no coquetry à la mode and according to precedent, but full of its very essence, though, perhaps, yet unknown to herself. She is a perfect treasure to an aspirant like myself, who longs for a subject on which to make his first awkward essay.”

“You must learn in some other school, my young adventurer,” replied Miss Calender; “I cannot consent that the heads of our poor innocents be turned for your instruction; nor indeed would I ensure you uninjured yourself—you may have reason to repent your attempt.”

“O, I’ll venture a cruel shepherdess and a broken heart,” replied Charles; “but if you will not afford me your countenance, I must even trust to my own ingenuity, and mark, now, what progress I shall make without you.”

Charles lost no time in justifying this bravado.

The next day, as he was standing at the door of the principal shop of the village, Love entered. Blessing his luck, he returned to the counter on some pretext; and while apparently waiting to be served himself, observed her with an attention which, though she was not unconscious of it, she bore with tolerable composure.

"Have you no other shawls?" said she, "I don't like these."

"Why not, miss?" inquired the lad pertly who was serving her; "I am sure they are very gay."

"That is just the reason I don't like them," replied she.

"She has good taste," thought Charles, observing the rejected shawls, "for those are perfect frights."

Other articles met with more favour, and having made her purchases, she retreated; but not being in as entire possession of her wits as usual, left a small parcel behind. She was scarcely gone when it was discovered, and Charles offered to follow and give it to her. Sauntering along purposely to allow her time to get considerably the advance, he did not overtake her till she had passed the more compact part of the village, and had made some progress towards home.

"Miss Heywood," said he, bowing, and showing the parcel as a sort of credential, "I have been so fortunate as to avail myself of your inattention."

Colouring to the eyes, Love would have relieved him from it, but for this he was prepared.

"By no means—not for the world—he should be delighted to carry it for her."

Though, when thus taken by surprise, she was as likely as another to be embarrassed and look foolish, yet Love was not a girl to remain long in such a predicament.

"I am sorry to give you so much trouble, Mr. Davenport," said she, recovering herself, and having the tact to address him by name; "but since you insist on it, you will at least have one of the pleasantest walks in Westdale to repay you."

"Who can doubt it, with such a guide! but," continued he, in the unceremonious easy tone with which he thought he might venture to accost a little country maiden; "but I must confess that I prefer animate to inanimate nature; and," fixing his eyes expressively on her face, "there are views that I admire even more than your beautiful country."

Though not particularly averse to a compliment, yet one so direct from a stranger Love felt to be neither proper nor agreeable; and turning away with an air of indifference, she walked on in silence. Charles perceived his mistake, and choosing topics less personal, talked of his former visit to Westdale, Miss Callender, and other like matters, in such a manner as to inspire her with some interest.

"Do you know," said he, after she had begun to feel more complacently, "do you know that I like

this mode of introduction much better than to have met you at one of your formal country tea-parties? where the ladies maintain their ranks so unbroken, that a poor fellow as timid as myself might as well attack a line of battle single-handed."

"Surely," said Love, smiling archly, "you cannot be afraid of *us*!—we have more cause to fear *you*."

"Me! Lord bless me—I am as harmless as one of your own lambs. I have come here to ruralize merely because I am too simple for the town; and even here I doubt if I shall have wit enough to protect myself—pray take me under your tuition."

"If you are so *very* simple," said Love, "you will do no credit to my teaching—therefore I shall not undertake it."

"O you are so literal!" exclaimed Charles, "you,"—he hesitated—he did not like to say "rustics," and he could think of no equivalent—"you sylvan—sylvan—sylvan ladies are so matter of fact, that unless a man talk sense he would do better to be silent."

"Some folks," thought Love, "find both equally difficult;" but she suppressed the repartee.

"Now, sometimes," continued Charles, "it is an amazing advantage to talk nonsense."

"Had it not better be as a soliloquy, then?" said Love.

"No, by no means; for example, my lack of wit, you see, sharpens yours—besides, 'tis often the best way in the world to develop a new acquaintance. A little skirmishing, even if not very skilful, serves to show our relative strength. Now, how long do you think it would have taken us to know each other as well as we do at this moment, if we had advanced in the usual way? 'Pray, sir, how do you like the country?'—'Very much, indeed, miss, I thank you.'—'Pray, sir, is not Westdale the most beautiful place you ever saw?'—'Decidedly so, miss.'—'Which do you like best, sir,—town or country?'—'Tis hard to answer, miss, when you ask the question.'—'O, sir, you're too polite!'—'Indeed, miss, you flatter; I'm only sincere.' And here would probably have ended our acquaintance; but now—I could almost venture to sketch your character—may I try?"

Amused with his rattle, which she began to understand,—so unlike the tame manner to which she had been accustomed,—she replied, carelessly, "Oh, yes; but remember I am not bound to admit it unless I choose."

"O, it shall be very favourable: to begin then—not romantic."

"No—not at all," replied Love.

"Not sentimental."

"No—not often."

"Quite indifferent to admiration," said Charles, significantly.

"Sometimes ; its value depends on the giver."

"Considers beauty superfluous."

"In others, perhaps," said Love, laughing.

"And would not be handsome for the world !"

"Unless seen," added Love.

"Upon my word I have done admirably !" exclaimed Charles.

"With my assistance."

"Can you draw mine ^{*}as truly ?"

"Let me see," said Love, unwilling to lose the opportunity thus afforded of repaying in kind.

"Not profound."

"No—not at all," said Charles.

"Not studious."

"No—not often."

"Quite indifferent to personal appearance."

"Sometimes ; the value depends on the ob-
server."

"Considers fashion superfluous."

"In the country."

"And would not be admired for all the world !"

"Unless by *you*," added Charles, bowing gallantly.

"And here we are at the end of our walk," said Love, putting her hand on the gate; then relapsing into the commonplaces of rural politeness, which had been put to flight by the trifling of Charles, she added, rather formally, "Will you walk in, Mr. Davenport?" but declining the civility, he surrendered the parcel, and bade her good morning, equally pleased with her and himself.

The consequence of this tête-à-tête ramble may be easily divined,—little more was necessary to suggest to Patty Pearson, and the circle of which she was the centre, that Love Heywood had certainly made a conquest of "the gentleman at Miss Callender's;" and the continued attentions of Charles authorized, not only the influence of Miss Patty, but the suspicions of others more interested and careful observers. Mrs. Heywood conceived the fulfilment of her best hopes to be near at hand, and with an exultation she scarcely attempted to conceal, watched his increasing assiduities; while Love, with a sensation of pleasure she did not analyze, saw herself distinguished by the preference of the most remarkable person who had ever appeared in the beau monde of Westdale. Charles himself was neither deceived nor intentionally de-

ceiving. He was amused by the novelty of his situation, and cheated out of his usual fastidiousness; and finding in the piquant graces of his rustic beauty a pleasing variety, he fearlessly admitted to himself that he was—*pro tem*—in love; but stopped not to reflect whether the object of his attentions would understand the transient nature of the sentiment she had inspired. This, as it had its origin in nothing worse than a desire for amusement, he was not disposed to think deserving of either thought or reproof. There was one person, however, who, with his usual sagacity, took a wiser view of the game than the parties engaged.

Mr. Heywood had remarked with as little satisfaction the assiduities of Charles as the conduct of his wife and daughter; but aware that silent counteraction was in such cases more effective than open opposition, he sought rather to chill the admiration of the former, and to thwart the vanity and folly of the others, by address than authority. In pursuance of this design, if a moonlight-walk were proposed, he was sure to recollect some pressing want of Love's services at home; if she were visiting, he failed not with unwonted parental care to go himself for her at a seasonable hour; and if Charles called on her at home, he affected to take the visit to himself, remaining immoveable in his

rocking-chair in the corner, ~~maugre~~ the hints and uneasiness of his wife. And here, though careful to omit no civility to the young gentleman, he was not over-solicitous to be entertaining; or by the generous flow of his conversation to prolong the visit. Charles, on his part, though vexed by this immobility, endeavoured to turn it to the best account, and to recommend himself by an amiable adaptation to the tastes and pursuits of Mr. Heywood; but, in consequence of his limited acquaintance with country concerns, or the indisposition of his host, these conversations were conducted with more brevity than satisfaction. Like the recorder on the examination of William Penn, Mr. Heywood seemed to have resolved, "If I should suffer you to ask questions till to-morrow morning, you would be never the wiser."

After having exhausted crops, cattle, and sheep, Charles took up the subject of horses; but here their usual disparity of views was apparent. He knew and valued none but the sleek town-bred race, curvetting like "coursers of ethereal breed," while Mr. Heywood naturally esteemed the animal for its useful and enduring qualities. Charles, nevertheless, willing if possible to meet him on his own ground, turned his attention to these; and after ascertaining the age and draught of those

belonging to Mr. Heywood, he proceeded with a deferential air in his inquiries.

"Pray, sir," asked he, "how much does it cost in the country to keep a pair of horses through the winter?"

"That's according to what you give them," said Mr. Heywood, dryly.

"Why—yes, sir—of course; but giving them what is common—what you would give them yourself?"

"Then 'tis according to who feeds them; one person will waste twice as much as another in feeding a horse."

"Well, let it be a person of tolerable, ordinary care?"

"Then 'tis according to the length of the winter," said Mr. Heywood.

"To be sure—of course," said Charles, a little vexed; "any one may know a horse cannot eat as much in three months as in five; but suppose it to be of the average length?"

"Well, then 'tis according to the kind of horses," said the impenetrable Mr. Heywood; "horses are like folks, some will eat as much again as others."

Charles was, in polite phrase, *au desespoir*; and, provoked to see Love bending over her work to

conceal a laugh at his expense, he took his hat and left the house, resolved not again to enter it.

This resolution, like many of the like, was made to be broken ; and it was not long before he presented himself once more at the little parlour door through which he had lately made his angry exit. But, by an evil chance, he, all unmindful of such vulgar cares, had chosen that day

“Which, week smooth gliding after week, brings on
Too soon”—

the “~~dreaded washing-day~~,” and after two or three unregarded taps, ventured to enter the forsaken parlour. Voices and bustle, however, at no great distance, assured him he was observed, and seating himself, he waited till some one should appear.

In the mean time, Love, occupied in labours which, in the olden time, the royal hands of princesses have not disdained, and in which even they acquitted themselves not more gracefully, presented at this moment an appearance which, however distasteful to modern refinement, was not unmeet the heroine of a rustic tale. At the back of the house was a wooden platform, slightly elevated above a grass-plat, appropriated to bleaching. Attached to this platform was a cistern, worked

by a windlass, and discharging its waters, with scarcely any effort, through a little trough. This spot, being airy and commodious, was in summer the scene of many of Mrs. Heywood's labours; and her husband, always willing to make "the women's work" as pleasant as was "consistent," had enclosed it with a slight trellis, over which Love had trained a luxuriant hop-vine, the produce of which supplied their own demand, and left a surplus to sell or give. Within this bower, for such it might be called, were Mrs. Heywood and Love on the morning alluded to; the latter fittingly attired, but with her accustomed neatness. Her hair—adroitly rolled up in preparation for the toilet when the business of the day should be over—was confined beneath a snug and not unbecoming muslin cap, the borders of which sufficiently shaded her face from a vagrant sunbeam that now and then strayed through the lattice of vines. Her neck and throat were closely covered; but her sleeves, carefully folded up, disclosed her fair round arm; and partly with the intention of elevating her to a more convenient height for her employment, but still more to secure her little feet and neat shoe and stocking from the water that in spite of their care found its way to the floor, she stood on a cricket, or small bench. Her

mother, who bore the burden of the business, and ever mindful as far as possible to preserve the tender graces of her daughter unharmed by vulgar toil, handed over to her from time to time only the more delicate articles, and those which, having passed through her own more practised and efficient hands, might be committed to such slender fingers for the easier care of rinsing; their labours meanwhile lightened by Love's musical voice, giving forth the odds and ends of twenty songs.

Their work proceeded well, till Mrs. Heywood, having caught a glimpse of Charles, hushed the melody, and bade Love hasten to her room and prepare herself to receive her visiter. This, however, she was not inclined to; either indisposed for the trouble, or willing to enhance the value of her presence on other occasions by withholding it now; but her mother insisted, and she obeyed. Instructed by certain female instincts, instead of haste or flutter, she leisurely arranged her curls, slightly altered her dress, and taking her little basket of "sewing-work" in her hand, entered the room with much composure, just as Charles's patience was at the last gasp; purposely betraying her knowledge that he had been some time in attendance, by a careless regret that her father should have kept him so long waiting. In the

mean time Mrs. Heywood, whose curiosity could not wait the termination of the visit, had so placed herself in an adjoining room as to catch snatches of their conversation.

"Humph," said Charles, in reply to the allusion to her father, and vexed to perceive the small sensation he had produced; "I should regret to interrupt his more useful occupations." Then drawing a chair near her, he took up a book that lay open on the table,—"'The Palace of Truth,'" continued he; "quite apropos,—I wonder, Miss Love, how you would stand such a test; come, suppose we make the experiment, and by a slight effort of imagination transport ourselves there."

Love laughed, and did not object.

"You agree then—very well—here we are at the gates—we enter—I have the talisman, so I am safe. To begin then; pray, do you really believe that I came here this morning to see your father?"

"No," replied Love, resolved to carry it through bravely.

"Do you suppose that I ever do?"

"No."

"She's right there," said Mrs. Heywood, aside, not comprehending either the allusion to the tale, nor the part that Love had assumed;—"she's right

enough there ; though I wonder a little at her letting it out."

"Why then do I come?" continued Charles.

"To amuse yourself."

"Are you sorry to see me?"

"No."

"Are you pleased?"

"Yes—when you go."

"What possesses her!" thought Mrs. Heywood ;
"why she's downright uncivil."

"Remember where you are, Miss Love," said Charles, in an admonitory tone ; "do you wish me to go now?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I am so busy," said Love, sewing away earnestly, "that I have not time to think about you."

"Well if I a'in't beat!" thought Mrs. Heywood ;
"what in natur' ails her, to act so?"

"But suppose," continued Charles, "that you were at leisure to recollect my existence, what would you wish?"

"That you were anywhere else. Excuse me ; but remember where I am."

"If ever I heard the like!" said Mrs. Heywood ;
"why she'll ruin every thing!"

"Ah!" cried Charles, in a tone of mock despair, starting up and seizing his hat—

"Hélas! je vais

Vous quitter pour jamais!"

"There!" said Mrs. Heywood, "I thought so! he's quite huffy, and I'm sure I can't blame him. That's French, too, I suppose—what a pity Love can't understand it. But Mr. Heywood is always so set!"

Love, however, understood enough for her purpose.

"Pray, Miss Love," said Charles, returning to his seat and resuming his inquisition, "pray, which do you admire most—my politeness, or the indifference with which you receive it?"

"My own indifference."

"And which do you think will last the longest?"

"Oh, my indifference—that is unchangeable."

"The girl is certainly out of her head!" said the dismayed Mrs. Heywood; "why that's as much as a downright refusal—I could shake her!"

At this moment Mr. Heywood passed so near the window as to perceive them. This unwonted sight, on such a day, at such an hour, was not regarded favourably, and he decided, with as little mercy as ceremony, to interrupt a colloquy which

he deemed neither "suitable nor consistent." Yet, unwilling to waste his own time, and expecting no co-operation from his wife, he took a more summary way ; and directing his course to the quarter of the yard where the well-filled clothes-lines were extended, with ruthless hand he slipped the knot which sustained them, and retreated unobserved.

The dismay of Mrs. Heywood, when summoned to the scene of the disaster, at

"Loaded lines at once
Snapp'd short"—

all experienced housewives will better conceive than we describe. In her first consternation and desire for immediate assistance, she bade her youngest boy "go see if the gentleman had gone;" but he, interpreting his mother's directions according to his own view of the necessity of the case, exclaimed in homely phrase, as if he too were in "the Palace of Truth,"—"That the line had fallen, and that Love must come directly and help mother with the clothes."

Charles, though imperfectly comprehending the calamity, had the consideration to take his leave, giving thereby the finishing touch to the mortification of Mrs. Heywood ; who had a glimmering sense that the associating Love with such ordinary

and vulgar occupations would, even if her unaccountable folly had not already done it, entirely frustrate her own ambitious views. Not such, however, were the reflections of Mr. Heywood, who exulted no less in the success of his stratagem than did Doctor Primrose in the overthrow of his daughter's cosmetics ; and as he passed his wife and daughter, painfully labouring at

" Dirt and gravel stains,
Hard to efface,"

slyly remarked, "That they would have saved themselves trouble if they had tightened their lines ; and that it was a pity to lose half a day's work for want of a little thought."

CHAPTER XVI.

Who shows

The earliest bloom,—the sweetest, proudest charms
Of Flora ?—ARMSTRONG.

WITH many provisions for our improvement and well-being, the innocent gratifications of the social principle seem among us, notwithstanding, to have received scarcely a proper consideration. Our fathers emigrated in a spirit of enterprise that could spare nothing to relaxation ; or in a stern, self-denying temper, that regarded even lawful amusements either as undeserving their attention, or as among the corruptions of the world on which they had turned their backs. A condition of safety and prosperity brought little change in this respect to their descendants, who, whatever may be their diversity of opinions in morals and manners, are nevertheless essentially a grave people. Like our country, we seem to have no youth. Our very blessings are of a nature so serious and ponderous, as to repress that careless-exuberance of spirit which, under institutions requiring only obedience,

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it is the interest of both rulers and ruled to cultivate. But with us, who have head, hands, and feet so busy,—such a weight of responsibility as nothing but the delightful consciousness of our own importance could sustain,—all merry trifling is nearly excluded. Individual support, the maintenance of families, the protection and enforcement of the laws, the administration of government, domestic and foreign relations, free trade and internal improvements, peace and war, each and all,—no matter how small or how great the interest, how confined or how extended the principle,—every man feels himself personally interested in and answerable for more or less. It has indeed been observed by foreigners, with some surprise, that females here are remarkably exempt from the care of the public weal; that they either know nothing or care little about subjects connected with it. This they have attempted to explain, by supposing that the necessary attention to their domestic duties incapacitates them for communing on these high matters. But there is a better reason. Government here, though extending over all its protection and vigilance, is a guardian, not a spy. It does not rudely enter our houses, hearts, and consciences; women are not made to feel its existence by an invasion of their tenderest affections, in

codes of conscription, disabilities, and test-acts. They are contented with the fact that they are citizens of a free country, and rest satisfied that the laws are generally well framed and administered, because the legislators and executors are their own husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, and neighbours; and conceive themselves to have the best government in the world, because, in the main—to use a female figure of speech—like a well-made garment, it fits perfectly, and presses nowhere. But let this same garment give token of fracture, decay, or uneasy alteration, we should find their tongues move as quickly as their needles.

It must, however, be admitted, that whatever may be the individual exceptions, we are not a joyous people; that while we declare ourselves the *happiest* nation in the world, the solemnity with which we assert it is sufficiently appalling to create some doubt of the fact. Yet we are good-natured and cheerful; and though we set about our enjoyments in rather a business-like sort of way, have nevertheless “a sober certainty of waking bliss,” and may in time improve.

To our two high festivals of liberty we have latterly, in some parts of the country, added annual agricultural and horticultural celebrations;

which, associated immediately with the interests of a large portion of the community, promise a permanent and salutary spring of enjoyment. For this purpose they should be made as attractive as possible ; avoiding alike ostentatious expense and vulgar excess ; and imparting to them a character of grace, simplicity, gladness, and heartiness,—of gratitude to Heaven and good-will to man.

With such intention, Miss Callender, though aware that the expected floral fête was in truth a very small affair, endeavoured to give it all the interest in her power ; deeming nothing altogether insignificant that promoted innocent gratification.

The eve of the expected day arrived. During the afternoon a gentle shower had fallen, just enough to lay the dust, to freshen every leaf, and to “hang a gem” on every flower, so lightly as not to mar their beauty. The sun smiled forth ; and a rainbow, brighter and more extended than usual, seemed as if it longed to span the laughing vale ; while the gushing fragrance might have justified the ancient fancy that the touch of Iris imparted sweetness. The birds, clamorous with joy, winged their way from bush to bush, interchanging their congratulations, and every thing promised a happy morrow.

At an early hour every pillow was forsaken,

and every young eye sparkled in the clear sunrise, that augured an auspicious day. Miss Callender and two other ladies had been appointed a committee of examination, and at nine o'clock they commenced their tour of inspection, in order to ascertain the respective claims of the fair aspirants. The lads of the village, with a courtesy worthy of all praise and imitation, had the previous day assembled for the purpose of clearing the streets of rubbish and every unpleasing object; and, from one extremity of the village to the other, there was an aspect of neatness and beauty becoming the occasion.

It would be little entertaining to follow the committee in their investigations, or to recount the recommendations they felt themselves authorized to bestow. Love Heywood, though professing the poverty of her garden, and her unworthiness of the honour of a visit, was not omitted; and received her meed of praise for the good order of her premises, and the luxuriant growth of her renovated rose, which spoke well for her skill and future success. What was more to her credit, and which, though she did not tell, we must, was, that a fine geranium, and her only one,—one that she had cherished like a household deity,—she had that morning presented to Mary Norris,

with a request that she would exhibit it among her own.

The examination over, the girls, arrayed in white dresses, hats trimmed with green, and a bouquet in their girdles, were arranged in procession, paired according to their size; the rear brought up by a merry troop of little ones of both sexes, who claimed a right to attend by virtue of divers small services—such as scaring from the gardens intruding hens with their large families; driving away mischievous kittens and puppies; keeping gates shut, &c. At the head walked Robert Heywood, Love's brother, who had begged for the honour of being their standard-bearer. This ensign consisted of the lighter garden implements bound together with wreaths of flowers, from the end of which floated a white banner, edged with green. On it was painted a sprig of the fearless mezereon,—which, putting forth its blossoms amid frost and snow, seemed an emblem of the resolution necessary to contend with our often unfriendly climate. A band of music had not been forgotten; and this—the hats and instruments of the musicians appropriately decorated—preceded the pretty train; and giving forth a measure adapted to the purpose, led the way to the village academy. Here, at the upper end, was erected a stage covered

with green, round the edge of which were arranged pots filled with exotics. In the centre were placed the premiums, three in number,—the value of which must be estimated, not by their cost, but by the limited funds of the society :—a set of garden-tools adapted to female use ; a flower-stand and pots ; and a *jardinière* or flower-table, of simple materials, filled with the finest flowers then in season. On one side of these sat the ladies of the committee ; on the other the venerable pastor of the village, Mr. Wheaton, who, with a paternal interest in whatever concerned his flock, had consented to meet with his young parishioners on this occasion.

The bustle of entrance having subsided, and the spectators and the more important actors in the business of the day being properly arranged, Mr. Wheaton, in few and simple words adapted to his hearers, expressed his satisfaction at the success of the little society ; its beautifying effects on the village, and the gain to the fair labourers themselves in health and knowledge, in a new source of innocent pleasure, and a further development of the wisdom and goodness of their Creator. Nor did he fail to apply the many apt similitudes of faith and practice with which the subject furnished him ; a subject so beautifully illustrative of all that we believe of the wonderful co-operation of Heaven.

and our own endeavours in that more difficult art,—the cultivation of the heart. It were vain to attempt to tell the varying and wholesome “applications” made by the good man; or how, his kind affections flowing out in love to all his young hearers, he comprehended their several ages and conditions. For some, whom he believed already won from folly and vanity, he devoutly wished that, being set in the kindly soil of a pure faith, their roots might be firm and vigorous, their growth constant and healthy, and that they might bring forth the beautiful fruits and sweet odours of a good life. Then calling to mind the less thoughtful, he tenderly implored that the little wildings on the common of nature, liable to be crushed and destroyed at every step, might be transplanted within the safe and sacred pale of the church; that they might be trained in all godly nurture; every irregular desire be pruned; every weed of perversity be eradicated; that they might be preserved from the frost of selfishness, the withering and consuming heats of passion, and the blight of a sinful world; that they might be watered with the dews of grace, and vivified by the warmth and light of divine truth; and that, finally, they might bloom in the garden of God—the heavenly paradise.

The girls with meek and reverent looks received

the exhortation. Here and there a flushed cheek, or a tearful eye, indicated that the heart had been touched; and the pure and softened expression of Mary Norris eclipsed, for the first time, the more sparkling graces of Love Heywood.

Next came the adjudging of the premiums, which was a matter of some nicety; the emulation having been so general that there was little disparity. After carefully comparing merits and opinions, the ladies assigned the garden-tools to Sarah Waters, in consideration that, with a fine show of flowers, she had few weeds. The stand and flower-pots were adjudged to Lucinda Holmes, because, besides these claims, she had that of having naturalized several beautiful wild flowers. And the *jardinière* was bestowed on Mary Norris; who, in addition to a garden without a weed, luxuriant annuals, and some of the most curious of the native plants, had with much care and patience carried safely through the winter several tender exotics.

This allotment, accompanied by well-merited commendation of all, together with a judicious intimation, that should their merits continue so nearly equal, it would be necessary to establish the principle of rotation in the distribution of rewards, gave general satisfaction. As the girls rose to leave the

room, a murmur of cheerful voices and friendly congratulations was heard; and they separated with the expectation of meeting in the evening at Miss Callender's, where a large party was to terminate the pleasures of the day; an expression of her good-will to "the society" which we trust will be rightly estimated. For on such occasions, we country-folk do not assemble to display our own finery, nor to criticise that of others. The cultivation of good neighbourhood and rational intercourse is, as it ought to be, the first motive; but after this, we do conceive that a proper attention to other wants is lawful and expedient. *We*, therefore, are not to be flammed with show-tables, annuals, musical-boxes, hand-screens, scrap-tables, caricatures, and perfumery; with one chance in twenty of a cup of coffee, about an equal probability of a glass of ice-cream, and a remote possibility of a seat: but we do expect to have a chair to ourselves, with a fair chance at whatever good and comfortable aliments are going, and not a "bare imagination of a feast." To prepare the needful, then, where no confectioner is to be found, nor any convenient "Tom tea-party,"—whom the reader may remember as one of those sable masters of ceremonies who on such occasions assume the responsibility, and seem endowed with ubiquity,

—it becomes necessary for all, from the mistress to the youngest “help,” to bestir themselves; and all effective hands assemble in that laboratory—the kitchen. Then begin the stoning of raisins, the pounding of spices, the beating of eggs, and the compounding of cakes of all kinds and sizes,—“rusk, cookie, federal, composition, election,” and generous “loaf-cake.” To this succeeds the arrangement of the second course,—fruits, sweet-meats, custards, and trifle—not “light as air.”

Meanwhile, amid these provident cares, the number of the guests is involved in the most perplexing uncertainty; and from the centre of this din of preparation may be heard at intervals,—as the messenger charged with the invitations returns,—the anxious inquiry, “Will they come? will they come?”—to which answers are given dark as an oracle. One “has unexpected company at home; if they go, she’ll be happy to come.” A second “will come if it don’t rain.” A third “will be pleased to come if her husband gets back in time from court.” A fourth “thinks some of going out of town; if not, she will come.” A fifth “has a quilt on the frame, presumes she will get it out in time; if so, she’ll come.” Some cautiously reply that “they know nothing to prevent;” others that “they will come as far as they know,” or “if no-

thing happens;" while some, wrapping the matter in tenfold obscurity, mysteriously reply, "maybe they will, and maybe they won't."

Yet these cares and perplexities are not without their reward, as all "lovers of happy human faces" have proved; and the evening at Miss Callender's passed off with a success more than equivalent for every effort, though without any thing worthy of special record, unless the following be deemed an exception.

The younger part of the company, after wandering about the grounds,—some observing the bustling movement of a gathering of swallows, others admiring the gorgeous evening sky,—had re-entered the house, except the three girls the successful candidates, who, separating themselves from the rest, conferred apart, and lingered in the garden. But the others had not long resumed their places in the parlour, when Mary Norris and her companions entered, she with a wreath of flowers in her hand, which, approaching Love Heywood from behind, she gently placed on her head. Love turned, and colouring with surprise, would have removed it, not comprehending why she should be thus distinguished; but several others exclaimed, "Let it be, Love!—let it be!"—and Mary, with a smile, explained the action.

"You are the only girl in the village, Love, who has had no chance for the premiums ; and we, who have been lucky enough to get them, know well that if you had been able to contend with us, you would have beaten us all. But while we have been taking care of our flowers, you have been doing better ; and we beg you this evening to wear this, as a proof that we think you in fact more deserving than any of us."

Love blushed, stammered, and would have still resisted ; but all were against her, and the coronal was not allowed to be removed. Mrs. Heywood, convinced of her injustice to Mary Norris, secretly resolved never again to give place to jealousy,—a determination she found more easy to make than to keep ;—and Charles felt himself growing sentimental.

"There *are* places," thought he, "where such a thing would have the air of a *scene*, and where, if I had witnessed it, I should have laughed at it with the rest ; but here—I don't know how it is—but there is such truth—there is such kindness about these people, that they make one amiable in spite of one's self."

Nor could he withhold a further expression of approbation when he found, that with the various games of dexterity and wit permitted by the sim-

plicity of country manners, was mingled an acquaintance with books, men, and subjects, he had not expected to hear discussed in such a place ; and this, too, in a tone of liberal and individual opinion for which he was even less prepared.

“ Verily,” thought he,—and for the first time perhaps feeling his own unimportance, yet not offended,—“ verily the Rambler saith well—‘ in the country every man is an independent being.’ ”

How much further he would have “ moralized the spectacle” we know not, for a strain of music put weightier matters aside ; and approaching the piano at which Miss Callender was seated, surrounded by her young friends, he found her accompanied by many voices, singing the following lines :—

Since all have their objects of pride
Which others less worthy may deem,
So some will the folly deride,
While to boast of our valley we seem.
They may laugh, we will not complain—
But own, while we sing of our bowers,
Tho’ their merits might well claim the strain,
We sing them because—they are *ours*.

If more lofty and leafy the trees,
More varied and fragrant the flowers,
If more balmy and healthful the breeze,—
Forgive us, because—they are *ours*.

If than Eden's the moon be more bright,
 If the beams on our valley repose;
 If the sun shed more glorious light,
 On our valley he sets, and he rose.

If more gracefully wander the stream,—
 It winds through our *own* meadow ground;
 If the mountains magnificent seem,—
 'Tis our *own* little vale that they bound.
 If the spirit be manly and high,
 If the maidens be lovely as fair,
 If intellect brighten the eye,—
 Perhaps 'tis because—they are *there*.

If the gaze on the spire fondly rest,
 If the ear love the bell's silver tone,—
 The same principle still is address'd,—
 They are dearer because they 're our *own*.
 If more hallowed the place of the dead,
 More sacred its simple white pale,
 If our feet there more tenderly tread,—
 'Tis *our* fathers who sleep in the vale!

The song ceased; and while significant glances exchanged by some of the company seemed to divide its authorship between Miss Callender and her city guest, Mrs. Heywood, in an audible "aside" to her husband, "wondered if Love hadn't written it! Besure, she hadn't never wrote poetry before; but there must be a first time for every thing."

"And a last time too, I should hope, Miss Heywood," replied he, "to Love's setting up to turn writer. I tell you she isn't one of that sort; and the more you try to put it into her, the more you'll spoil her for what Heaven meant her. It isn't suitable, Miss Heywood, nor consistent. But come," added he, seeing Charles approach his daughter, and marking the smile with which he was received; "come, wife—'tis past ten, and we should be moving."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years
Thy tenderness for me! an eye that beam'd
With love! a brow that never knew a frown?
Nor a harsh word thy tongue?"

THOMSON.

THE next morning, as Love Heywood passed near the dwelling of Mrs. Prescott, her attention was arrested by the appearance of preparations for repairs and improvements. Inferring from this that it was to be occupied by a richer tenant, and feeling a repugnance to put disagreeable questions to Mrs. Prescott, she loitered under the shade of a maple-tree, to inquire, when an opportunity should offer, of one of the men engaged in erecting a scaffolding.

"Yes, yes," thought she, "it must be so—poor Mrs. Prescott is obliged to move. It is too bad—after living here so long. To be sure, it was a poor place; but then she had got wonted to it; and she can't expect to have any much better. It is a shame I haven't been to see her lately," con-

tinued she, with a pang of compunction ; “ but I have been so busy with—” She stopped, for she could not exactly tell with what—nothing that furnished even to herself an excuse for the omission.

“ I do wonder who is coming in,” added she, with the common curiosity on such a subject ; “ nobody, I’ll engage, half so good as Mrs. Prescott. They are going to raise the house, or new roof it ; and seem preparing to add on a room near the little buttery window. How well I remember the time—the only time, I believe—I was so angry with Allen for whipping my Maltese kitten, because she got through the bars of that window. Well, it will be all the better for somebody else ; though I’m sure I shall never see the house with any pleasure. O, there I suppose is the new tenant,” as she observed a person who appeared to be directing the workmen. “ He looks too young, though, to have a family. I do wonder who he is. Now he points to the fence. Yes, that is all going too. Well, that’s no matter ; a new one has been wanting long enough. Yet I shall hate to see that little gate torn down that I have opened so often. I remember the time Allen put that button on it, and how he laughed at me when, in trying to reach over and turn it, I slipped down, calling me ‘ Goody Too-short ;’ and crying, ‘ Take care, Love,

—those that reach far must stand firm.' Poor fellow ! I wonder when he'll come home again."

' During this soliloquy, the stranger drew near the spot where Love had stationed herself. She retreated, and, hiding behind the trunk of the tree, continued her observations.

" He is handsomer than Mr. Davenport—who can he be ? It seems as if I must know him ; he looks so like some one I have seen—but where, I cannot tell."

" By enlarging the yard in this direction," said the stranger, " which Mr. Warner says he has a right to do, as by his deed his land extends thus far—the road having encroached on his premises,—we shall be able to take in this tree," approaching, as he spoke, the maple behind which Love had ensconced herself. Sensible of the awkwardness of her situation, she emerged in some confusion from its shelter, and, in so doing, encountered face to face the speaker.

There is a sympathy, an instinct, not to be cheated by lapse of time nor change of exterior ; and it was by some such mysterious teaching that, at the instant they met, their mutual recognition was declared.

" Love Heywood !"—" Why, Allen Prescott ! is it you !" burst forth simultaneously, accompanied

by a hearty shake of the hand and mutual kind inquiries.

While they are thus occupied, it is proper to bestow a few words on the affairs of Allen, whom we left plodding on in the acquisition of the law. It is unnecessary to detail an experience differing little from that of other young men in like situations. Suffice it to say, that he had just been admitted as an attorney, and that Mr. Evans, having proved his ability, and more than ever dependent on him, had taken him into partnership; a circumstance that, in the rapid advance of the town of C—, opened to him an almost certain prospect of success. The long-projected visit to his mother had been repeatedly frustrated; at one time by the illness of Mr. Evans, and at others by various causes which he could not control. Consoling himself for these disappointments by contributing what he could to her comfort, he had availed himself of his first leisure on the completion of his clerkship to see her, and to provide more effectually for her, by arranging with her landlord certain improvements to the little dwelling she occupied; for which he willingly pledged himself to pay an increased rent. He had arrived the preceding evening; but, his mother's house being remote from the business part of the village, his com-

ing was as yet unknown. He was, however, too kindly remembered to be long unnoticed ; and from neighbour to neighbour "the rumour ran," "that Allen Prescott had got to be a lawyer, and had come home to see his mother ; that Squire Warner was fitting up the old Loring-place, and that he was likely to get a good interest for his money."

To return to Allen and Love beneath the maple-tree,—to whom, in this short space, their glowing cheeks and the natural unrestrained gladness of their eyes had supplied all that was wanting in the more tame and regulated language proper to such a meeting. All inquiries had been made and answered ; and Love, discreetly resisting Allen's invitation to walk in—observing that two men were waiting his directions,—wended her way homeward ; and Allen turned again to the business in hand with a mind less intent on it than before.

During his long absence, and amid the efforts by which he had been pressing forward—amid the dull realities of poverty and labour, his mind had often wandered into the bright regions of a happy future ; and the image of Love, the sweet and merry companion of his childhood, had always mingled with his day-dreams. It is not, therefore, surprising that this latent but never-forgotten in-

terest should manifest itself on the first favourable opportunity.

"How pretty she has grown!" thought he; "though, to be sure, she was always so; and how glad she was to see me! Well, it is a comfort to come home and find hearts as warm as one left them. What a pretty little figure she has too—just the right height—it would have troubled me if she had grown up a *tall* woman. I never could think of her but as a precious little jewel that a man might wear in his bosom and hide in his heart; and what a nice little hand she has, and how heartily it returned the pressure of mine; and what a pleasant voice, it is even sweeter than when she was a child, and then it was always music to me—but would not any voice be sweet that uttered such kind words! How old must she be now? Let me see—she was nearly six years younger than myself; then she is now about—about seventeen;" and, unconsciously, he added aloud, "just the right difference."

"So I'm thinking," said the carpenter; "I've measured the ground, and it will take ten posts if we set them at this distance, leaving just a good space for the gate."

Recalled to himself by this misapplication of the interesting calculation into which he had fallen,

Allen, with a smile, summoned his thoughts from the airy castle he ~~was~~ building to the repairs in wood and stone that demanded his attention.

Love, in the mean time, as if endowed with a new sense of enjoyment, walked cheerily on ;—the sweet summer morning ; the glancing waters of the stream, by which her path lay ; the willows “turning their silver linings to the breeze ;” the graceful elms that here and there broke the uniformity of the meadows ; the rich grass bending as the zephyr kissed it,—all seemed invested with new beauty.

“It is the soul that sees ;

When minds are joyful, then we look around,

And what is seen is all on fairy-ground.”

The past, too, sent back its store of recollections : the perils of the snow-storm ; days of early sympathy and companionship ; the kind regrets of separation, and now the joys of meeting ; the pleasure that spoke in Allen’s eye ; and, finally, the emphasis with which he had said, “I shall see you very soon,”—all coursed through the mind of Love in sparkling succession.

Ah ! fancy, though a truant jade, and when winged by vanity, taking strange flights, is soon brought back to her perch by true affection. To perceive the force of which remark, it is necessary to state that Love had not thought once of Mr.

Davenport this whole morning, except to institute a comparison to his disadvantage,—a circumstance of rare occurrence. For it would be hardly fair to tell how “the working-house of her young brain” had lately laboured in idle fancies, suggested by the flattering attentions of Charles, and the indiscretion of her mother ; all of which faded away in the glow of natural feeling which now resumed its influence.

While thus moving lightly forward with “printless feet,” she heard behind her a footstep; and turning round, saw that Charles, with his gun on his shoulder, had leaped the fence, which separated her from the high-road, in order to join her.

The animation visible in her countenance he very naturally imputed to this rencounter ; and pleased to perceive the effect of his presence, his own manner became unintentionally more interested. He talked, indeed, of ordinary matters, but imparting by look or emphasis a significance to trifles ; while Love, on her part, from a feeling of consciousness, forbore to speak of Allen, and thus confirmed him in his mistake.

“What luck,” she inquired, “with your gun, this morning?”

“O, my usual luck,” replied he ; “it is always my fate, I fear, to aim better than to hit.”

"Is your hand ~~on~~ your eye at fault?"

"Not my eye," replied he, fixing his on hers at the same moment; "not my eye; that can discern truly enough what is worth a shot, though I may fall far wide of it."

"I am sorry," said she, carelessly, "that you are so poor a marksman,—but I wonder, if that's the case, you do not save both time and powder."

"Ah! we cannot always do what we would, you know. Now, for instance, I should like to ask you if you will be sorry that I must go away in two days; yet I know not if it is wise to do so."

Had Charles spoken but a few hours before of leaving Westdale so abruptly, the momentary flutter produced by it would have left him at liberty to infer a much stronger interest in him than she really felt; but now, occupied by a new sentiment, she answered with cordiality, but no emotion, "I'll help you out of this difficulty, then, by telling you that I shall be very sorry, very sorry, indeed; but why must you go?"

"For a reason that will appear as ridiculous to you, I dare say, as it does to myself,—because I have opened an office, into which no man has as yet entered but myself; and have set up a sign, making known that I, Charles Davenport, am an 'attorney-at-law,' information to which the public

appears as indifferent as if I had not studied three mortal years to acquire the right. And there must I go to sit waiting for clients who will not call, and to study precedents for causes I shall never plead ; instead of staying here with the flowers, the butterflies, and—you, Love. Is not this a misery ?”

“ It is, at least, as profitable,” said she, laughing, “ as to sit waiting for fish that will not bite, shooting at birds you never hit, and saying civil things to girls who don’t believe them.” Then turning with an air of indifference to pluck a vine, scarce thicker than a thread, which had spread itself like a web over the mass of underwood that fringed the bank, she said, as she offered it to Charles, “ Did you ever see any thing so delicate ? these little blossoms look like particles of snow,—don’t they ?”

“ Pho !” replied he, impatiently twisting round his finger the specimen she had given him ; “ I am afraid you care little about my going, Love ; you do not even ask me if I shall ever come again : have you no interest, no curiosity ?”

“ Not much,” said she, with one of her prettiest smiles.

“ You don’t believe I am going ?”

“ O yes, I do.”

“ And you don’t expect me to return ?”

“ Yes, I do.”

"Return!—when?"

"O, when you please; to see Miss Callender, you know,—or the flowers, or the butterflies, or—me, perhaps." Then, as he was about to reply, resuming her careless tone, she requested him to take a book to Miss Callender, that she had in her hand, and thus save her the trouble of going that way.

"But why not go? why not prolong your walk?"

"For a reason which will appear as judicious to you, I dare say, as it does to myself,—because I have begun a piece of work, into which no one has as yet put a stitch but myself,—and because I am tired; information to which you are as indifferent as if I had not walked three mortal miles to acquire the right of being so. Will you take the book?—if not, I can send it in the afternoon."

"O yes; but I would take you too."

"I dare say,—but I am not to be taken," replied she, with much the same air as a frolicsome child cries, "Catch, who can!" and turning off quickly into a path which diverged towards her home, she was soon out of sight.

"Say you so, Miss Love!" exclaimed Charles, as he stood looking after her. "Now, that is downright defiance; and I am almost provoked to take

up the gage, and pursue in earnest what was commenced in sport; yet I must take care, or I may find that this wild rose wears a thorn!"

Can any fair one interpret the movements of Love's mind during this interview? We should be sorry to refer to her own experience; but even without that clew, female ingenuity readily winds through these intricacies;—as complicated in the heart of a village maiden as in that of a heroine of more lofty pretensions. Had Love been straitly questioned on this occasion, as we admit she well deserved to be, and required to say, "If she loved Mr. Davenport?" she would have answered, and truly, "No." If she had been farther questioned,—“Had not she a sly notion of Allen Prescott?”—“Dear, no! how should she? he had been gone ever so long; and she had only seen him half an hour.”—“What did she mean by looking so sweet at Mr. Davenport?”—“Nothing.”—“And what did he mean by looking so sweet at her?”—“She did not know,—not she!—how should she?”—“Had it occurred to her as possible that Allen's early fondness had never been extinguished, and that she might easily revive it? and if so, that she would prefer him to the greatest and richest man in the world?”—“No, indeed! but she should not answer any more such questions.” The

truth was, that in a state of agreeable excitement, arising from kind feelings, gratified vanity, a sense of her own power, together with some dim surmises and ill-defined anticipations that pointed towards Allen, she was not in a frame of mind that fitted her to act with due circumspection,—and we surrender her to whatever rebuke she merits.

Meanwhile Charles sauntered towards home, ruminating on his approaching departure, which he would willingly have deferred; a disposition increased, when he found, by a letter awaiting him, the absence of his aunt and uncle on a summer tour. Miss Callender's kindness now interposed. Why could he not pass that interval at Westdale? she expected guests the ensuing week, and he would be indispensable for their entertainment. The colonel, too, pronounced his "veto," and Charles, who had always

"been a truant to the law,
And never yet could frame his will to it,"

acquiesced with little conflict.

Should any be curious to know how, in a situation where they could not avoid meeting, the awkward circumstances attending the last separation of Charles and Allen were to be got over, it may be said, that they little understand the metal of our

hero who suppose that he was to be abashed by recalling an humble condition from which he had emancipated himself, or by the remembrance of a rencounter in which he felt himself to have had the advantage. Justly elevated in his own estimation by the difficulties he had surmounted, he was in no temper to feel hostility towards any; yet aware of the misconstructions to which he was liable, he quietly resolved to regulate his own manner by that of Charles.

Charles, it must be confessed, was a little puzzled; not in consequence of an ebullition of boyish passion, which, had it occurred between equals, might at this interval have been a matter of mere mirth; but he felt rather queerly at meeting on terms of equality a person whom, when known as an inferior, he had treated unhandsomely. At the same time, too, he was sensible of the difficulty of manifesting cordiality without a mixture of condescension; which, under the circumstances, would be peculiarly offensive. In the kindly air of Westdale, however, all noxious principles seemed neutralized; and the first meeting passed off better than either had expected. Yet Charles was not prepared for the manner and improved appearance of Allen, and was besides conscious of an embar-


rassment on his own part, that a little disturbed his good temper.

Personal beauty, a gift by which Nature often vindicates her prerogative,—conferring it at her pleasure on those who may be deemed to have the least right to it,—had been liberally bestowed on Allen ; and though formerly Charles had not marked what boys seldom observe in their own sex, he was now fully sensible of his advantage in this respect over himself. The interval that had elapsed since they parted had expanded Allen's person—not much above the middle height—in fine proportion, and so moulded as to express both vigour and flexibility. His hair, several shades darker than formerly, and a complexion of the right masculine tone—clear, yet not fair—gave effect to a rich blue eye. The character of his face was thoughtful, yet smiles sat very naturally upon it. In those externals of dress, and merely conventional manners, which, mortifying as is the concession, do help to make up the whole individual, he was, to the nice perceptions of Charles, perhaps deficient, though no other eye in Westdale could have detected an imperfection in his clothes or carriage. Yet these seemed even to Charles of less importance there than elsewhere ; and he was constrained to admit, that to a reasonable observer

Allen was unexceptionable. His deportment pleased from its simplicity, and consideration for others ; sincerity and a kind temper supplying the place of precept and effort, and effecting that in which these often fail. Preserved alike by truth and good sense from all pretence, happy to feel himself among those he loved best, and certain of their esteem as well as sympathy, he was at once modest and assured.

“ Confound the fellow ! ” thought Charles, “ what a quiet air of self-respect he has. Not, indeed, the true nonchalant air, which we initiated only understand ; yet, though there is something in it which amuses me, I cannot for my life help admiring it. He is apparently no more conscious of ever having been in an inferior condition than I am ; and at the same time infinitely less exalted than I should be, if I had worked my way up as well as he has. How handsome, too, he is ! and what good language he uses ! Now and then a little odd and provincial, to be sure, but never vulgar.”

If such was the impression made on Charles, it may be imagined how favourable was that produced on others, and how, in the commendations of her son, Mrs. Prescott found a compensation for all her privations. Long and tenderly did they



dwell on the occurrences of the nine years that had parted them. "But now, dear Allen," said his mother, "all my trials are paid, when I have you safe by my side, as kind as ever, and no ways spoiled by the wicked world you have been exposed to."

"Why, mother," replied he, smiling, "you speak as if I had been among the heathen! You must not think that I lost sight of all goodness when I turned my back on Westdale. I have found honest people and excellent friends everywhere."

"That is true, Allen, and I desire to be thankful for it; and trust that you in your turn will be a friend to the friendless. A lawyer can do much good, Allen, if it is in his heart to do so. If he is not a 'stirrer up of strife,' and if he 'open his mouth to plead the cause of the poor and needy.'"

"Yes, mother," replied Allen, again smiling at her exaggerated estimate of his present functions; "but you must recollect that I am not more than half a lawyer yet. If I live to write myself 'counsellor,' perhaps I may open my mouth to some purpose."

While Mrs. Prescott sat regarding with delight the improved looks of her son, he contemplated with tender regret the alteration in hers. When he left her she still retained traces of her youthful face;

and he, her only child and sole remaining comfort, had been cherished with a fondness, which had preserved in him the admiring affection with which children so treated hang on a mother's looks long after their dependence on her cares ceases. With an interest in whatever affected her appearance, he had been in the habit of remarking with more than common attention the very little variety of dress her condition admitted of; and delighted in the exhibition of the black silk gown and better cap—relics of happier days,—which distinguished the Sabbath, or an occasional visit to a neighbour. But she was now verging towards sixty, and time had set its mark upon her; yet Allen, unwilling to admit that age had worked the change, kindly passing his hand across her brow, said, "Mother, I am afraid your trouble on my account has helped to print those furrows on your brow, that used to be so smooth and white."

"If it has, dear, it is not, Heaven be praised! your fault. You know mothers cannot help being anxious even about good sons."

"No, I suppose not—but I must try to smooth them out again, at any rate; and you must let me see you soon in the shawl I brought you—and here's a pair of new spectacles, that are lighter and prettier than those you wear now: let me see if

they are becoming—and if they suit; if not, I can exchange them.”

They were taken from the morocco case, opened, and fitted on.

“Why, Allen,” said his mother, “they are as light as a feather, and as clear as day!—how could you hit my eyes so exactly? What a comfort they will be to me! How came you to think of it?”

“How should I not think of them, mother, or any thing else I can do for you? It is but little, very little as yet; but industry and Heaven’s blessing may make it more; and if my money does not increase, my love shall never fail.”

Mrs. Prescott made no reply; but a tear that dimmed the new spectacles answered for her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

——“When supper came ; and after that,—
And when reluctantly I took my hat,—
——When cordially you shook my hand,
——your accents bland
Still sounded in my ears.”

KEATS.

THE joyous sun that had let Love forth to her morning ramble had nearly accomplished his daily course, and the good people of Westdale had suspended their labours. The mechanic had put aside the implements of his craft ; the farmer had removed the stains of earth and toil ; the matron had adjusted her cap and kerchief ; the lads of the village had cast their frocks ; and the pretty “maidens of the villagery” had released their glossy hair from pin and papillote, and, attired in neat and simple guise, were either quietly catching the breeze at the door, or arranging the evening meal.

The last rays of the setting sun, streaming through the “morning-glories” that hung their drapery over the west window of Mrs. Heywood’s “keeping room,” fell on a tea-table, invitingly

spread ;—but a snow-white napkin laid over it seemed to indicate delay. The hearth was garnished with fresh spruce, and the mantel-tree dressed with flowers. By a window sat Love ; and though habited as usual, she more than once turned to the glass, as if more than commonly solicitous ; and though there was still light enough to ply her needle, it lay idle on her lap, while she looked from the window, or, with unwonted restlessness, wandered to the door. Her father sent one of the children twice to see if she were not ready, and her mother was equally surprised at the delay. But Love's instinct had not deceived her ; and she had just begged a moment's reprieve from her father, as the closing of the gate announced a visiter, and Allen Prescott made his appearance.

He was received with much good-will by both Mr. Heywood and his wife ; and the latter, who was always more ready to suspect a manœuvre than her husband, exclaimed, " Well, to be sure ! now I've found Love out ! She never let out she expected you to tea ; and I could not see into it, what set her out to be so engaged about it this afternoon in particular—nor what was her notion in keeping it back. Why didn't you tell me, Love ?" continued she, casting an anxious glance

at the table, as if she feared her housewifery might not appear to advantage; "I could have tossed up something good for Allen in no time, and glad of the chance."

"I did not *know* he was coming," answered Love, colouring a little at her exposure; "but I thought," added she, her natural cordiality and gladness breaking forth, "I thought that if he wanted to see us as much as we wished to see him, *perhaps* he would come."

"That's a good girl!" said Allen, extending his hand, and shaking hers heartily; "surely *you* could never doubt that."

Mrs. Heywood now removed the napkin, and saw, with the satisfaction of one never indifferent to the display of any part of her household, that every thing was as it should be.

"The china cups!" thought she; "well, Love has some sense,—loaf-sugar, two kinds of preserves, smoked-beef, pepper-grass—she has got no cheese, though,—she never will put that on, unless I make her—that's a notion she's got at Miss Callender's,—and, I declare! fresh sugar ginger-bread!—she must have made that while I stepped into Miss Hayden's."

Well pleased with the sufficiency and good order of her board, she dispensed with urgent

kindness all that it offered ; while Mr. Heywood omitted nothing on his part, and, in happy mood, indulged, as was his custom at such times, in a sly hit at his wife.

“ This is Love’s butter, Miss Heywood, isn’t it ? ”

She replied in the affirmative.

“ I thought so,” said he, winking at Allen, “ it is so sweet, and printed off so handsome ; and I must say I like this good plain cake better than that which is all full of raisins and notions ; at any rate, it is as well to be contented with this, if one can’t get no better—eh, Allen ? ”

“ Why, Mr. Heywood ! ” said his wife, in a remonstrating but good-humoured tone, “ I don’t feel as if that was quite fair. I am sure you have all kinds when you want them ; for I won’t turn my back on nobody for keeping a table. However, you know, Allen, Mr. Heywood would always have his say.”

“ My say, Betsey ! All the town knows I am under better government than any man in Westdale. Why you know, now, folks call me ‘ Miss Heywood’s husband.’ ”

This wit had its effect with persons happy enough to laugh even at a dull jest ; and, tea being despatched, while the females were occupied in removing the table, Mr. Heywood led the conversa-

tion to places and things with which Allen had become acquainted during his long absence; and city and country, trade and law, were in their turn discussed.

Love being again disengaged and seated by her little stand, Allen produced a pretty morocco work-box, and placing it by her, begged her to accept it; at the same time quoting the words of the old song,—“‘Suld auld acquaintance be forgot,’ Love?”

“No, indeed,” said she with animation; “but I hope you don’t think I need a keepsake, Allen, to remember *you*.”

Though unnecessary as a memento, it was nevertheless evident that it was received with as much pleasure as the donor could have desired. The key was applied, and all the interior arrangements and conveniences explained and commented on.

“There,” said Allen, “are needles, cottons, and silks. You see I know the names of these things, Love, for I have been a shop-boy in my time, and dealt out these wares to the ladies. And here is a thimble, small enough, I hope,”—at the same time gently taking her little hand to try it. “Stay, here is a guard too—I believe you call it,—to save the thread from cutting your finger. Let us try that too—why, they fit admirably. And here is a yard

measure; let me see if I can take your height by it, Love—stand up one moment—one yard and so much—that is three feet—four feet—let me see—five feet and about two inches. Why, what a little girl you are! yet I wouldn't have you taller for any thing."

"Here, too, is a bodkin," said Love, continuing the examination of the box, and removing a piece of quilted silk,—“and, I declare, here is quite a nice looking-glass,”—peeping in it at the same time, and smiling as she caught Allen's eye.

"Yes, Love," said he, "the more's the pity, perhaps. See how vanity creeps into ladies' work-boxes!"

"An excellent scissors, too," exclaimed Love, testing the points.

"And knowing that girls seldom have such a thing, I have added a penknife," said Allen, "which I believe is a good one—try it."

She opened it, and in making an experiment of the edge, cut her finger.

"Ah!" cried Allen, "I am sorry—that's a bad omen, if I were superstitious."

"Yes," said Mr. Heywood, significantly, "knives will cut Love."

"Not past remedy, I hope, though," said Allen,

wrapping the finger in his own handkerchief, while Mrs. Heywood procured a bandage.

"O, 'tis nothing," said Love, as her mother returned ; " Allen has cured it already."

The finger properly attended to, the examination of the box was completed by Allen's opening another compartment, and disclosing a pretty little volume of selections of poetry—the purest and simplest in their character, and such as well suited Love and her condition :—extracts from Collins, Cowper, Goldsmith, and Parnell,—Burns's *Cotter's Saturday Night*, and some of his exquisite songs, Langhorne's *Fables*, Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, and others of the like kind. This, with her own name in Allen's writing, was more acceptable than all the rest, and the remainder of the evening was spent in perusing and admiring it—Allen directing her attention to the accurate descriptions of rural objects, the true and beautiful pictures of nature and affection,—gratified to observe that they felt the same sentiment, perceived the same truth. The days of his childhood came back to him ; again Love's eye rested on the same page with his own—again their hearts were touched at the same moment,—and the long interval was forgotten till the clock struck a warning note, and he was compelled to take his leave.

And now will it not be naturally supposed that visits so pleasant were often repeated, and that each succeeding interview deepened the impression of the preceding? But the effect on the several parties concerned will best appear by a peep into the same little "keeping-room" before alluded to.

"Allen Prescott is a likely young man," said Mr. Heywood, as he replaced the candle one evening, after lighting him to the door; "quite a likely young man."

His wife, who, with many kindly recollections of Allen, had at first been gratified to perceive the interest with which he appeared to regard her daughter, but who now began to fear a counteraction unfavourable to her higher views, replied in the affirmative; taking care to throw in a qualification in the form of a wonder, that he should not have come to see his mother before, if he was so well able to afford it.

"Because," said Mr. Heywood, "he had something to do. A young man who expects to be respectable can't be staging it over the country, and spending whole weeks doing nothing but fishing, and shooting, and walking up and down a'ter a parcel of girls—it isn't consistent, Miss Heywood."

Mrs. Heywood, who knew well where this in-

situation pointed, replied, "That isn't what I mean, Mr. Heywood; but I do feel as though, in nine years, Allen Prescott might have found time to come and see his mother—I like to see a person show nat'ral affection."

"And I should like to know if he wasn't proving his nat'ral affection all the time in better ways than in idling about? And now, isn't he fixing his mother as comfortable as any reasonable woman can desire?"

"O, I don't mean to say but what Allen will always do his *duty*; I only speak about *feelings*," said Mrs. Heywood, making up in emphasis what her observation wanted in point.

"Well," replied her husband, "when I see folks do their duty, I always conclude their feelings are about right:—it would be well if everybody gave as suitable evidence. Besides," added he, with a side-look at Love, who had not allowed herself to take any part in the discussion—"if any one mistrusts Allen's having feelings, I should like they would watch him when Love is singing 'John Anderson my Joe,' or, 'All the airs the wind can blow.'"

This was precisely the train of ideas to which Mrs. Heywood did not wish the spark to be applied, and she replied, carelessly, "I'm sure there's

nothing in his liking to hear Love sing—everybody does that; and Mr. Davenport often brings his flute, and accompanies her.”

“Every one to his taste,” said Mr. Heywood, purposely misunderstanding this term of art; “every one to his taste; but to my mind, Allen’s company is worth his twice over.”

“Why, Mr. Heywood, how you do talk! you don’t understand,—Mr. Davenport blows the flute while Love sings.”

“Well, what of that!” said the wilfully obtuse Mr. Heywood; “only waste labour—taking two to do what is better done alone. Why, there’s more sense in having that machine that Allen brought here the other day, for the winds to blow on, that makes music by itself. I can’t call the name just now: what is it, Love?”

“An Eolian harp, sir.”

“Yes—yes; and, now I think on’t, where is it, Love?”

“I put it in the window in my room, father,” said she, looking rather consciously; “I wasn’t sure you would like to keep it here.”

“Why, I think it makes very pretty music,” replied he; “but if you’ve a mind to have it all to yourself, Love, I’ve nothing against it.”

Here Mrs. Heywood again interposed, and re-

minding her daughter it was time to go to bed, she cut short any further conversation on what she regarded as a dangerous subject.

"I wonder, Mr. Heywood," said she, as soon as they were alone, "you should talk so to Love."

"Talk how, Betsey?"

"Why, putting things into Love's head about Allen Prescott; you don't consider,—you may do her a mischief."

"I'll tell you what, Betsey," said Mr. Heywood, resolved, since he must endure a matrimonial debate, it should be to some purpose,—“it is you, and not me, that will do Love a mischief. You are ready enough to put things in her head about young Davenport, who, though he comes hankering round here, I tell you, has no more idea of any thing serious than he has of any thing useful—and that, I guess, isn't much. Not that there is any thing bad about the young man, neither—the difficulty is, he hasn't nothing to do, and so thinks it pleasant to come here and talk and laugh with Love; but, besides, to be plain with you, if he was ever so much in earnest, I should be sorry to see my daughter married to him. He has got money enough to keep him idle all the days of his life,—and that's not a son-in-law to my mind.”

What would Charles have thought, had he heard

this disparaging rejection of himself and his fine fortune! The wife, however, was of a different opinion. Poor womankind! It must be conceded they have their weak points. Mrs. Heywood, compelled by her husband's directness to similar frankness, declared, on her part, a full belief of Charles's serious intentions; her satisfaction thereat, and moreover her surprise at her husband's indifference to such a match for their daughter. "An independent fortin! and, besides, such a near friend of Miss Callender's;" declaring that "she had always thought it a kind Providence that had opened a door to Love at Miss Callender's,—and now it would prove so."—"Why, as to independent fortin, Betsey," replied Mr. Heywood, "there's different notions about that: I call a man independent that knows the right use of his hands and eyes, neither of which young Davenport does yet,—but that's neither here nor there; what does our daughter want with an independent fortin, Miss Heywood? As to Miss Callender, she is a nice sensible woman, and has been a great friend to Love,—and I thank her and Providence for't: but," added he, with an admonitory shake of the head, "we may, nevertheless, make such a use of that door as Providence never intended, and even turn it into a trap-door after all, Miss Heywood."

"Why, Mr. Heywood!" exclaimed his wife.

"I am in earnest, Betsey; and I can tell you," added he, in a reproving tone, "that I don't like people to follow out their own fancies, and then talk about the leadings of Providence. To come to the matter in hand, and to use your own words, Miss Heywood, the only door that I can see opened is to a match between Love and Allen—and why? just because it is suitable and consistent; and I must say, I'd rather give her to him than to the other, fifty times over."

"Well, well," said his wife, replying only to the last observation, "suppose you would—they don't care nothing about one another, now, at any rate—any farther than old acquaintance: and why should you be putting it into her head, when it has not got into his?"

"Miss Heywood," said her husband, turning to her with a comic expression of kindness,—**"Miss Heywood, it isn't so long since I was looking out for a wife myself, but what I can tell the signs; and if Allen finds as good a one, he'll do well. He doesn't run on in a flippant kind of a way about beauty, and singing, and one and another sort of trash; but he talks to Love about something that has sense in it, and seems to want to know her thoughts about matters of some use, as if she were**

a rational creature; and then, instead of hurrying her off hither and yon to ride or to walk, he'll sit and look at her, as if he could eat her, while she is giving the children their supper, or clearing the things away. Then, too, he does not ask me forty questions about nothing at all, but talks about business, economy, expenses of living, and so on:—and I mind when I speak to him of Love's smart, handy-ways,—which she has got all from you, Betsey,—as I do, sometimes, just to try him; he listens to me as if I was a minister!"

"Well, it's no use," said Mrs. Heywood, quite unmoved by the tender reminiscences of her husband; "it's no use, I can tell him, for Love has no more thought of him than I have."

"Wife, wife, I thought you were sharper. Why you don't bear your age as well as I do, Betsey; have you forgot your own feelings, when I can remember mine so well? don't you see the difference? When Mr. Davenport is here, Love is quite nat'ral, and not dashed a bit; but when Allen is here, though she laughs and talks, she has a kind of an anxious way with her, as if she was much more concerned to please him than the other."

"I don't see where you find all this, Mr. Heywood; I'm sure I ought to know Love's mind as well as you, and I can't see it."

"Well, well," said he, satisfied that if his wife could be kept quiet matters would go as he wished, "all I say, Betsey, is, that I would advise you not to be managing and tutoring too much in this business. You are a smart knowing woman, and like to give things a helping hand ; but there are some wheels, Miss Heywood, that will turn better without your spoke than with it. And it may happen, that while you try to move one partic'lar one, you'll stop them all."

Mrs. Heywood did not so underrate her own talents, and, in spite of her husband's counsel, went on with her machinery in her own way ; oiling and smoothing where she wished to expedite the movement, and with a daring hand opposing impediments wherever she apprehended an adverse impulse.

In the mean while the trifling of Charles, for which the only excuse was, that if he had no design beyond the present moment, he at least had no unworthy one, would have little impeded the current of true and simple affection, if the wise maxim of "let well enough alone" had been adhered to ; but first Mrs. Heywood, and then Love herself, disturbed and turned the gentle stream.

Allen, yielding daily to sweet influences, soon detected himself in forming plans for the future,

with the hardihood and passion of a confirmed lover. Prudence, indeed, at first took the alarm, and suggested difficulties,—his yet scanty resources, the obligations he had entered into for his mother, his own youth, the inexperience of Love,—but the parley ended as such conferences are apt to. His means *must* increase, he should do more for his mother instead of less, youth was an objection daily diminishing, and Love was too efficient as a daughter not to make an admirable wife; at any rate, why not secure her by a promise, even though they should wait till Prudence herself were dumb?

Having arrived at this conclusion, but resolved to do nothing without the approbation of his mother, Allen seated himself one evening by her side, and taking her hand, said kindly, "You have given me, mother, much good counsel, yet you have not said one word on a subject which I thought mothers never forgot."

"What is that, Allen?"

"Cannot you guess?—marriage."

"Bless me, Allen!" said she, unable yet to regard him as other than a boy, and startled at the idea of a new interest that might withdraw him still more from herself; "you are entirely too young to think of that yet, surely."

"I believe," said Allen, smiling, "that my father was even younger when you allowed him to think of it."

"That is true," said Mrs. Prescott, with a sigh; then, after a pause, having recovered from her first surprise, she added, "I am sure, Allen, if you have found any one to your mind, and you can see your way clear, I shall not say any thing against it; I only wish she may be worthy of you."

"And that I can get her," added Allen.

"I am not afraid of that," said Mrs. Prescott, with a pardonable degree of maternal presumption, "if she is only good enough."

"Of that you can judge as well as I," said he, in a manner that expressed his confident affection and his certainty of approval; "what say you to Love Heywood?"

Mrs. Prescott's countenance fell. "I don't know about Love," said she.

"Not know!" exclaimed Allen, with surprise and pain; "how?—why?—explain yourself, mother."

"Why, if I must speak,—though I don't wish to fault Love, for she has many good and pleasant things about her,—the truth is, Allen, that she has been spoiled; and, unless she is much belied, has a great many vain and flirting ways, which I

should be very sorry to see in a girl that was to be your wife. Besides, the whole town has talked of the pains that she and her mother have taken to catch young Davenport: I wonder you have not heard it,—but perhaps if they can't get him, they may think that you will do."

"Young Davenport," "you will do," were alternatives that rung harshly in the ears of Allen. He had heard nothing, suspected nothing; satisfied with Love's manner towards himself, and never imagining that Charles could have any serious purposes. But the idea that his own favourable reception was owing to the failure of higher views,—that the smiles to which he had trusted were only bestowed on him because unsuccessfully tried on another,—chilled the feelings to which he had so lately surrendered himself, and suggested the propriety of proceeding more warily. He did not reply directly to his mother's last observation, but extracted from her in detail the village rumours, which made out a rather bad case against Miss Love; who stood accused of designs, not only on the heart of Charles, but certain others also,—simple village swains. But as some of these charges were rather vague, and few overt acts could be incontestably alleged, further than practising with eyes and smiles, Allen, it must be

admitted, would have been less affected by them than his mother deemed prudent, but for the mortifying relation in which he was made to stand to Charles Davenport, against whom, for obvious reasons, all the pride and opposition of his nature would, on such an occasion, be excited. Upon further reflection, too, he recollected inequalities in the manner of Mrs. Heywood, which at the time had not affected him; and after well revolving the matter, he determined, whatever it might cost him, to subject himself to restraint, and Love to scrutiny.

But though Allen's altered manner soon struck the vigilant eye of Love, it would not long have deferred their mutual good understanding, had not she impatiently endeavoured to effect by a manœuvre what simplicity and uprightness would certainly have brought about.

"How is it to be accounted for?" thought she; "what am I to do?" To the first inquiry she could give no satisfactory answer; but in reply to the last, she had recourse to the mistaken policy—which has disappointed many a silly girl—of stimulating his affection by alarming his jealousy; an expedient which the continued visits of Charles afforded her an opportunity of putting in practice.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Good heaven! they whisper! Is it come to this?
O! I did think she had a guileless heart,
Without deceit, capriciousness, or art."—CRABBE.

THE day after this new artifice to be played off on Allen was planned, as Charles entered Miss Callender's parlour he met Love, her eyes beaming with pleasure, and her step indicating haste. He would have spoken, but with a slight courtesy she passed and left the house; and Miss Callender, apparently as pleased as Love herself, explained the cause of their evident satisfaction.

"Love is as happy this morning as a queen is, or is supposed to be."

"So I perceive," said Charles, "and you seem scarcely less so. May I ask what can have produced such a sensation?"

"You will probably laugh at that, and the cause; but you must remember that we have not our capacities for enjoyment vitiated by strong stimulants—a small matter, therefore, serves to make us happy. In this instance, it is nothing more than that Love has succeeded in converting some of her

pretty fancy work into money,—a transaction in which I have been her factor; and she has just gone to show the fruits of her industry to her parents."

For an instant it was rather revolting to Charles, that a girl honoured with his attentions, however unmeaning, should actually work for pay; he replied, however, in a tone of congratulation, that he was glad that she had been successful; adding, "We shall soon see the results in a new bonnet, dress, or some other decoration for her pretty person."

"Not so, indeed," answered Miss Callender. "Were that the sole end in view, I might still have aided in what would have furnished a justifiable indulgence, but I certainly should not have done so with the same pleasure. Love has had a better purpose; to provide her brother the means of going to school in a neighbouring town, where he can have more advantages than here. A little more money was wanting for this object than Mr. Heywood could conveniently spare; Love undertook to make up the deficiency: I engaged to dispose of her work, among my friends in New-York, and to-day I received the returns."

The good feelings of Charles were now predominant. "The amiable little creature!" thought

he ; " I wonder how many of her superiors would have been capable of an action involving equal effort and self-denial !—I am sure, for my own part, that I have never done half as much for any human being."

Full of what he conceived to be the heroic virtue of Love, he took his evening walk in the direction of Mr. Heywood's ; intending, under cover of making a purchase for his aunt of some of Love's work, to contribute to her fund. On entering he expected to see some trace of emotions similar to those he had himself experienced ; but the little circle was as calm as usual ; Love neither more nor less cheerful, Robert, the youth for whose benefit her earnings were designed, reading by her side, Mr. Heywood looking over the fresh newspaper, and not even Mrs. Heywood betraying any elation.

As there was no allusion to the transaction, Charles conveyed his wish in an under-tone to Love ; who, not comprehending his intention of delicately aiding herself, replied, as if addressed on a matter of common business, that " she was sorry she could not accommodate him, but that she had nothing more to dispose of."

Charles looked rather blank,—he supposed Love had sufficient tact to understand that he wished to

oblige her, and not himself; and Mr. Heywood, peering over his paper, gave the conversation a more general character by taking part in it. "He wasn't sorry, for his part," he said, "that Love had no more such sort of things to sell; they were no special use to anybody."

Here Mrs. Heywood interposed with her frequent "Why, Mr. Heywood!" and Charles said, with some surprise, "No use, sir!—if they had only served to show your daughter's generosity they might be said to have a use,—and of their advantage to my friend Robert there can be no doubt."

"Why, as to generosity," said Mr. Heywood, willing to reduce the compliment till it should have no intoxicating property, "that always brings its own reward; so there's the less reason to say anything about it. Love has done what's kind and becoming in a sister to a brother; I hope it is not so uncommon as to call for so many fine words: but as to Robert's concern in it, that would have been as well secured if she had earned the money by something as useful to others as that is to him. If, instead of Love, for three or four months, sitting up nights and putting her eyes out with a hundred notions that I can't call the name of,—if they have any,—suppose she had made things good and ne-

cessary in themselves, would not the money have done Robert as good a turn?"

"Undoubtedly; but perhaps she could not then have found a purchaser."

"Maybe not; but I should like to see it tried, however; and, at any rate," continued our utilitarian, "it is to be hoped the time will come, that he who buys, and he who sells, shall be equal gainers."

Mr. Heywood had opened the conversation to prevent any by-talk with Love; he now felt himself moved to continue it, in order to furnish Charles a few hints for his own benefit; and by a rather sudden transition gave it that direction.

"Now we are upon education and such matters," said he, "you young gentlemen who have ~~for~~ and great advantages don't think of all the good you might do, if you would. If you know more than other folks, you ought to instruct them; if you have better manners, you ought to teach those who have none. Not that everybody can come up to the same mark. There will be differences and distinctions, as they are called, here as well as elsewhere,—some made by nature, some by fortune; but what of that? We are all equally important in our several stations; and I guess, if the ups and downs of life are calculated, equally

happy. But what I mean is, that all should try to use their opportunities, not only to grow wiser themselves, but to make others so ; that they may all be contented and friendly one towards another. For the best way, I take it, to quiet an uneasy, envious temper, is to help a man to see in a wider circle ; then he overlooks the little unevennesses just about his own door—his narrow, inconvenient path, and maybe some briars by the way,—and is so pleased with the general prospect, and the good in the long run to his children, if not to himself, that he is contented with his lot. It is not here as in the old countries, where the change seems from bad to worse,—here things alter for the better ;—it is better in my time than in my father's ;—better in Robert's than in mine ;—more education, more privileges. But to keep things prosperous, people must have a good spirit ; and if they pull down, it must not be because a thing cuts off their own view, but because it crowds their neighbours as much as themselves."

On this his favourite topic, Mr. Heywood could, though not perhaps in "good set terms," have discoursed an "hour by the dial ;" but Charles, reverting to the observation that seemed more immediately to touch himself, said, "I shall be happy to show my respect for your advice, sir, by aiding

this good cause in the way that offers itself so opportunely." And turning to Love, he added, in a tone of solicitation, "You can surely devise something by which I may yet have the pleasure of assisting your efforts for Robert?"

Love now first comprehended the compliment conveyed to herself in his application, which she had before taken according to the letter; but a desire to "assist her" was another matter; and with a proper delicacy she declined. Mrs. Heywood, however, who had overheard the request, and who was always glad to make the most of all opportunities of intercourse, interfered, suggesting various articles, to all of which Love found some objection, till she proposed "gloves—thread-gloves." "Love knit beautifully," she said, and she had exactly the right thread in the house, so that they might be set up immediately."

Charles demurred—"It was too trifling a purchase;" but on reflection he found a remedy—"He must be allowed to set his own price, and Love must engage to knit as many as he would take."

Mr. Heywood did not quite fancy all this; but Charles had so far propitiated him by his respectful attention—(ah, who knows not the value of a listener!)—and perhaps, too, like the good vicar,

"tired of being always wise,"—that he could not find it in his heart to take his usual unceremonious mode of interference ; but, contenting himself with seeing and hearing all that was done, remained silent.

"Hearing and seeing all!" Let no father so flatter himself; for in the midst of the discussion Allen entered, all unconscious of the plot of Love against his peace ; and at sight of him the lurking imp of coquetry was aroused. Turning coldly away, she was at once engrossed with Charles ; and the business of the gloves, in which she at first reluctantly engaged, was now of all things most interesting. The knitting-needles were sought for, and a glove "set up," as quickly as her little fingers could fly. Then it was to be tried on, to see if she had the proper size of the wrist : it was too small, it must be enlarged ; then too large, it must be reduced. During these operations their voices gradually sunk almost to whispers ; and smiles of intelligence and laughter, without any adequate cause, surprised and irritated Allen.

Mr. Heywood, who now found that he could by no means "hear and see all," marked, nevertheless, enough to account for its evident effect on Allen ; and, vexed with Love, though he could not penetrate her purpose, vexed with his wife for sug-

gesting the occasion for this foolery, and vexed with himself for permitting it, he very earnestly wished both Charles and the gloves in the paradise of fools, with all other useless and impertinent things. Allen, meanwhile, receiving attention from no one but Mr. Heywood, and his much divided and perplexed, did not long remain in a situation so little amusing; and Charles, diverted with a stratagem he easily detected, having settled the important business of the gloves, soon followed.

"Well, now," thought he, as he went homeward, "if this is not too much!—what a fine chapter of human nature I have opened! Here is one of these simple country girls—'innocent creatures,'—as Miss Callender calls them; one who never passed the limits of her native valley, practising as knaveish a piece of coquetry as a trained city belle. She as instinctively resorts to the usual female arts, as a kitten plays with the first mouse her mamma the cat has caught for her. First, she does all she can to attract me, but, dubious of success, she pounces on the next unwary traveller; and now, to secure her game, plays me off against him! Whether her design in all this is merely to show her power, or to carry the more important point of marriage, I cannot exactly determine, for she is a little enigmatical; but I rather think the

former. *Me* in sober earnest she cannot aspire to ; and, if I can gather her temper by her mother's, she looks rather higher than Allen. However, *comme il vous plaira*, Mademoiselle Love—sport is at present my business ; and as I owe this young spark condign mortification, for presuming to worship at a shrine honoured with my offerings, I am quite willing to assist your harmless vanity.”

As Charles was inclined to refer much of the practical philosophy and stern simplicity of Mr. Heywood to the necessity of the case, a circumstance that came to his knowledge a few days after excited in him some surprise. It had been suggested to Mr. Heywood by his friends, that at the next election for members of the Legislature he would probably be proposed as a candidate ; to which he replied, “ he saw no reason for a change—why not continue the member of the preceding year ? he had done well ; and was better than a raw hand.” It was answered, that as the town thought of availing itself on this occasion of its right to send two members, his going would not interfere with the representative alluded to. Upon this, Mr. Heywood positively refused all concern in the matter. “ ’Twas true,” he said, “ the town had the right to send two, but for all that was to be done, one was as good, and better ; and that for

his part he should be ashamed to go and sit there, and take the people's money for doing nothing." Knowing his decided temper, here the business dropped. But Mrs. Heywood, whose mortification at his refusal was extreme, could not deny herself the only indemnification—that of communicating to her female friends "that Mr. Heywood *might* go to the General Council, if he pleased."

"Why, this," said Charles, recalling Mr. Heywood's favourite term of approbation, "this is 'suitable and consistent'—I begin to like this old gentleman in spite of his churlishness. I'll go and have a colloquy with him on the high matters of which he discourses so *ex cathedrâ*; the more especially as my uncle enjoined it on me to acquaint myself with the 'mind of the people.' So far as this mind is enshrined in the pretty form of Miss Love, I have dutifully respected his advice; and, if not very instructive, I have certainly found it very agreeable. But I do really feel soberly inclined; and do honestly wish that the young lady may be absent, or too busy to distract my attention."

But Love was neither absent nor busy, and her father was both; so that the praiseworthy intention of Charles evaporated in a rattle of fifteen minutes with herself in the garden; where she

loitered, ostensibly to water her plants, but really for no other reason than that she saw Allen at a distance, and knew he must pass the spot where she was thus engaged.

Similar opportunities were not wanting to put in practice the design of Love ; among others, the promised gloves were no mean accessories. No gauntlet, in former days, ever wrought more successfully the destruction of peace and happiness than this simple pair of thread-gloves, under the management of herself and Charles. They required to be adjusted in every stage of their progress ; not only the wrists, but the thumbs and fingers, width and length—important and accurate measurements, reserved, of course, for the presence and annoyance of Allen, who could with difficulty suppress his vexation.

“ Here, Love,” said Charles, on one of these occasions, “ just here the thumb is certainly too tight. Sec,” added he, at the same moment taking her hand, “ sec, I cannot close my fingers without straining the glove out of all shape ; you must positively alter it again, Love ; this will never do.”

Love laughed, remonstrated against the alteration, and struggled against the detention, but so feebly, as Allen thought, that he rose abruptly and

left the room; while Charles smiled significantly, and Love blushed with pleasure, at perceiving the effect of her scheme; but, alas! not the effect she intended.

Instead of securing her conquest by thus alarming the jealousy of Allen, she had excited with it other feelings, very adverse to her designs. Indignant, grieved, astonished, he could scarcely credit his own senses, or the inferences of his own mind, when he compared the past with the present. "How was he ever again to trust his own convictions! She, who had seemed so kind, simple, confiding, that modesty alone could suggest a doubt of her sympathy,—now cold and constrained to him, yet yielding herself delightedly to the unmeaning trifling and flattery of Charles!" For Love, from the very degree of her interest, had overacted her part. This, though it betrayed her to Charles, was unintelligible to Allen; who, always direct himself, saw in it caprice and vanity,—unaccountable, indeed, but still, as he believed, real. And even if he could have suspected artifice in Love, he would more naturally have supposed the rich and fortunate Charles the object of it than himself. Had he penetrated the truth, he would have blamed her even more, though he would sooner have forgiven her. Sometimes he was in-

clined to seek an explanation; but why? if, as he was compelled to believe, her conduct was the result of whim and indifference, wherefore expose himself to the triumph of a frivolous girl? All that remained was to avoid her,—a change remarked with very various feelings by the parties interested;—Mr. Heywood suspecting something wrong on the part of his wife, she well satisfied that Allen should not come as long as Mr. Davenport did, and Love internally fearing that she had played her game wrong.

CHAPTER XX.

“Take of the holy cup
Of temperance, nymph of the crystal spring.”
OGILVIE.

THE time now drew nigh when Allen was to return to C——. The day after the ensuing one he had appointed for his departure, when, with a deep feeling of concern for Love, notwithstanding her waywardness and folly, he determined, after well weighing the matter, to see her once more, not as a lover, but a friend. Certain that Charles had no object but amusement, he resolved to point out her danger; and, whatever might be the pain or consequences to himself, to deal plainly with her; not only on the selfish trifling of Charles, but on the vanity that could be deceived by it.

“I have earned the right thus to treat her,” thought he, with emotion; “I have earned it by years of true and tender regard; and if any thing were yet wanting to confer it, it is the bitter lesson of disappointment which she has taught me. She

has trifled with my feelings to gratify an unworthy caprice,—I shall wound hers for her own peace. I know that I am not influenced by a selfish purpose,—for myself I have neither hope nor desire;—and if Charles be really in earnest, it will nevertheless be no injury to either to teach her circumspection.”

But when and how was he to meet her? At her own house they would be interrupted. The next day was Sunday; and after the holy time, it was a permitted and customary recreation for the young people to walk or visit.

“In the elm walk, to-morrow evening, then,” thought he, “I will ask her to meet me;” and having thus settled it, he turned his reflections to the manner in which he should address her; for, however honestly he meant to discharge the stern duty of a reformer, he resolved to adapt himself to the gentle nature he hoped to influence.

The Sabbath came and closed. As the sun disappeared, Allen, putting into his pocket a note for Love, containing his request, strolled out, trusting to accident for a messenger, or to the chance of meeting herself. While yet in the lane which communicated with the more frequented road, he met an old friend, one who, however humble, and though himself sufficiently occupied at present with

other thoughts, he could not pass without some notice.

"Ah, Lindy!" said he, "how do you do, Lindy? I was afraid I should not see you again. I have met you just in time to say 'good-by,'" extending his hand, as he spoke.

"No, no, Allen," replied she, her careless face softening into an expression of kindness, and putting her hand behind her; "I never shake hands with my friends when we part;—when you come back I'll give it free enough."

"True," said he, recollecting this peculiarity, of which she could give no explanation but that such leave-takings "made her feel awfully."—"True, Lindy, I have forgotten this whim of yours:—but how is this?" observing her dress little suited to the decorum of the day, and her everlasting basket on her arm. "You don't appear to have been to meeting, Lindy; I hoped you had improved in this respect."

"To meeting! no, indeed, I work too hard all the week for that; I'm clear tucker'd out by Saturday night."

"What do you do, then, on Sunday?"

"Why, mostly, in the time of them, I go a'ter berries and nuts."

“‘Berries and nuts!’ to *rest* yourself, Lindy?”

“Besides,” added she, evading a direct answer, “I ha’n’t got no clothes to go to meeting.”

“Miss Callender would remove that difficulty in a moment,” said Allen, “or she’s greatly changed.”

“She is as free to give as ever, but I sha’n’t ask no such thing as that,” replied Lindy, seating herself, as she spoke, on a little grassy rising by the road-side, and placing her basket on the ground, as if disposed for conversation; a friendly intimation that Allen could not resist. Her personal kindness in former days urged him to exert for her benefit whatever influence he might yet retain; and at the same time recollecting that she would be the very person to execute his errand to Love, he seated himself by her, while she gave vent to a polemic spirit, which nowhere but in New-England would have been excited in one of her colour and degree.

“To come straight to the point, Allen,” said she, “and not to stand paraphrasing about it, there’s no use in my going to meeting, for there’s a good many dark things I can’t see into.”

“That may well be, Lindy,” replied Allen, neither willing nor competent to enter on abstruse points of theology; satisfied, too, that her case required

more direct and personal treatment, and that in a cavilling temper, not unnatural to an acute but ignorant mind, she was more quick to raise objections than careful to use the means afforded.

"That may well be, and I certainly have not learning enough to give you light on these matters ; but are you sure, Lindy, that you live up to the light you have ? I'll venture to say it will be given you in proportion as you use it. Now, how is it about your practice, Lindy ?—let us settle that before we undertake knotty points, about which, perhaps, I know as little as yourself. You are honest, Lindy, and true, true as the sun that never fails ; but—are there no secrets in that basket ?—don't be affronted, Lindy ; you began—not I."

"Affronted ! I guess not ; why should I ? I haven't nothing here I'm ashamed on. There," said she, twitching off the cover, "there's nothing but my jug that I was going to leave with Lem Barton, to buy a gallon of rum betwixt us."

It was as Allen suspected ; but knowing Lindy's mood, and that reproof to be salutary must be cautiously administered, he shook his head, and replied, "Ah, Lindy, you do then keep to this bad habit still ?"

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had not then commenced ; but many individuals, aware of the evil to be corrected, had in their several spheres laboured to that purpose ; not, however, without opposition as to the means,—some honest and dispassionate, some wilful and disingenuous ; of this last description was that of Lindy and her associates.

“ To be sure I do,” said she, in reply to Allen’s question, and nothing daunted. “ To be sure I do ; and as long as I don’t take enough to hurt me, I don’t see no reason why I shouldn’t.”

“ But you take more than you once did, Lindy, don’t you ?”

“ Yes, I suppose I do, and what of that ? You’ll not find me backward, Allen, to own to what I do.”

“ No, no, Lindy, I know that of old ; but you say you take more spirit, do you also take more good wholesome food ?”

“ No, nor I don’t want it, for I haven’t got no stomach for it.”

“ No,” said Allen, “ I suppose not ; and do you drink tea and coffee ?”

“ No, not often, for I can’t afford it—how should I ?—while there was only ‘Siah and me, besure, I could make it out, for it’s a poor hen that can’t scratch for one chicken. But now, though he’s

older than you be, he can't do nothing to signify ever since he broke his ribs by means of being thrown from a horse: and then he has got a wife and child, and she is weakly too; so I have got now to scratch for four. I thought along back to make something by keeping Toby Simmons, one of the town's poor; but that ain't nothing. They won't allow no more than fifty cents a week, because that's what Sam Wright bid them off for; and for that I must board him, clothe him, wash for him, mend for him, and pay his doctor's bills—so it costs more than it comes to; besides he's a poor notional cretur, worse than a baby."

"That must, indeed, be an unprofitable speculation, Lindy," said Allen, laughing; "but why do you continue to keep him?"

"O, I don't know," replied she, with a careless shrug; "'cause he wants to stay, and I hate to say 'no' to him—and then I lost money by Joe Sadd, too."

"What! Sadd the cooper? I recollect him, a man well to do. What happened to him?"

"Why, I want to know!" exclaimed Lindy, astonished that such a fact should not have reached Allen. "Didn't you never hear that he'd gone off 'twixt two days?"

"No, indeed. Joe Sadd is then sad Joe, and

made you sad too, Lindy—but,” added Allen, suspecting the motives of Lindy’s digressions, “let us go back to where we started from. You say you cannot afford a comfortable dish of tea and coffee; but suppose now, instead of filling this jug to-morrow, you were to buy half a pound of tea—don’t you think the money would be as well bestowed? that you would feel better, ay, and work better too?—you can afford that at least as well as spirits.”

“Allen,” said she, angrily, “if you are one of the cold-water folks I don’t want to hold no talk with you. I hear enough about them slops; you can’t tell me nothing about ’em. Of a cold sleety morning, after I’ve walked two miles to a day’s washing, and am all of a shiver with the cold, shaking like Belshazzar, I must wait till the parlour folks get their breakfast; then the tea-pot is sent into the kitchen, and the white help takes hers; then she gives it a stir, and some more hot water, and turns out for some slip of a hired boy; and then on goes more hot water, and then another stir, but no tea, mind; and then she sings out ‘Come, Lindy, your tea is ready.’ No, no, I can’t work on such trash as that, Allen.”

“Nor do I ask you to, Lindy,” replied he, not contesting an assertion which he knew from the

general habits of the place must be exaggerated ;
“but if that be the case, you know you can take
your own tea in your basket.”

“My own tea ! what, take my own tea !—that’s
one way, indeed ! I might as well work for
nothing and find myself !—no, I sha’n’t do no such
thing.”

“Why not your own tea, Lindy, as well as
your own rum ?” asked Allen, significantly ; “you
take your bottle with you, don’t you ?”

“Besure I do, because there’s such a stir now
making about it that some folks don’t like to give
any ; but tea, indeed ! that’s another thing.”

“Well, Lindy, notwithstanding what you say,
I have too much respect for you not to hope
better things—I expect yet to see you give up
spirits.”

“Never, never, Allen.”

“We won’t say any thing more about it just
now, Lindy—’tis rash, perhaps, to make sudden
resolutions ; but, Lindy, I want you, for old friend-
ship’s sake, to make a bargain with me. If you
will do without spirits for six months—”

“I won’t do no such thing, Allen.”

“And put by in a little box,” continued he, not
heeding the interruption, “every cent that you
would in that time have spent for rum,—m

every cent,—and send me word that you have done so, I will send you a new gown. Begin now with this half-gallon. How soon would you probably get another?"

"I don't know—how can I tell? just when I wanted it,—maybe a week, maybe less; for I ain't one of that sort that keeps all their drink to themselves."

"Then, at the rate of fifty cents a gallon," said Allen, "there's not less than a dollar a month! sometimes more; upwards of six dollars in six months! Why, Lindy, you drink up nearly a cow a year, and grow thin all the time! You don't weigh by thirty pounds what you did when I went from Westdale. Come, give me your hand on it—is it a bargain?"

"Allen," said Lindy, a little angry, somewhat ashamed, yet with a sort of good-humoured determination, "you think I can't do without spirits; but you're up a tree this time! I'll take it when I like, and let it alone when I like—perhaps, too, I'll do as you want me to; but I sha'n't say as I shall, nor that I sha'n't. I'm like Squire Buel's sorrel, that throwed 'Siah—give me rein enough, and I can go quiet; but as soon as I feel the curb, I'm off. I don't want none of your gowns, I ain't going to be hired to leave off. That's like Miss

Callender's trying to hire me not to work Saturday nights. I know well enough, if I do, what's right for pay : it's no use, and so I told her. Land ! if I was to give in to Miss Callender's notions as some does, I should make money by it. There's Dimy Tuttle, now,—the moment she sees Miss Callender coming, she camps down into bed, and ' Oh, dear ! she is so sick !' and ' she can't work a stroke,' and ' she is so desp'rate sorry she can't go to meeting !' and all such kind of talk ; and Miss Callender swallows it all, and goes home and sends down rice, and sugar, and tea, and all sorts of notions for ' poor Dimy !' "

" Lindy, Lindy, take care," said Allen, " or I shall bring another charge against you ; how do you know that the woman is not really sick ?"

" She's nothing but slack, Allen, and spleeny, and full of the hypo—such folks are always down at the heels—a poor shiftless do-little."

" And more to be pitied than any, for they can't be cured. But never mind Dimy Tuttle now. As you were saying, Lindy, you agree, then, to this bargain ; and as to the gown, don't take it as pay, but for old times' sake. You know you were always kind to me ; and mother says you have done her many a good turn since I went away."

" Miss Prescott's a nice woman," said Lindy, in

a softened tone. "I ain't no fool, Allen ; I can see when folks talk religion only out of form, and when it comes from the heart : but as to Dimy Tuttle, she's no better than myself, and that's bad enough."

"Well, well, never mind her just now ; when you get your new gown, and have saved cash sufficient to buy a hat, if you are too proud to ask one, perhaps you will be willing to go to meeting instead of gathering berries ; and now," added he, rising to cut short further debate, knowing, as Lindy said, that it was never safe to tie her too short, "I have a favour to beg of you. You go by Mr. Heywood's, Lindy ; just give that with your own hands to the person for whom it is directed—to Love, I mean ;" then turning off to avoid inquiry, and the scrutiny of the keen eyes bent on him, he took a by-path which led to the spot he had appointed for the interview.

But, unfortunately for Allen, he could not have hit on a more unfitting emissary. Mr. Heywood had been one of the most zealous advocates of the cold-water system, which had proved so inflammatory to Lindy. In addition to this, Love, acting by her father's orders, had been the first to refuse to her, when working at his house, her hitherto unquestioned perquisite of a "bitter ;" to which

injustice, as she regarded it, Mr. Heywood had added certain cutting words; altogether making an indelible impression on Lindy's mind, as tenacious of injuries as of favours. She had therefore on that occasion resolved, and said, "that she would never enter those doors again;" and being thus committed, it was not a light matter that would induce her to cross his threshold. Thus much for her personal objections—she had others that touched Allen himself. She had heard (for what did she not hear?) from "Miss" Bolton, who had it from her brother's wife, who had it from Patty Pearson, who heard "Miss" Heywood say it herself, "that Allen Prescott wasn't fit to hold a candle to Mr. Davenport—that nobody would think of one when they could get the other, and, at any rate, Love wasn't such a fool." This chain of proof had its weight with Lindy, never good at sifting evidence; and here she held in her hand a note, which "sartin must be a love-billet, for what else could it be?" and this note, she argued, might be the very means of putting Allen, her favourite Allen, into the power of one predetermined to despise and reject him; and besides, "not one half good enough,—a silly, fictitious little cretur" (meaning thereby, probably, affected). Out of respect, therefore, to her own

consistency and his peace, she determined to give it back to him, together with her advice, which indeed nothing but the nature of their discourse had prevented her doing in their late meeting; and she turned about with this intention. But Allen, impelled by painful feelings, had sought an obscure path, and, walking fast, was already out of sight.

"Well," said she, with a consideration worthy the imitation of Mercuries intrusted with similar errands, "I'll keep it till to-morrow—he won't be going away under some days, and I can hand it back to him in the morning, as I go over to Miss Callender's—that will give him time to cool. I know it can't do no harm for a love-billet to wait; they ain't never of no consequence; they ain't nothing about work, nor business, nor sickness, nor death, nor nothing of no use to nobody. I didn't give him no promise about it—not I—for I'll never darken their doors agin. So there it goes into my basket, right alongside of the jug that Allen takes on so about. Land! how easy it is to tell what's best for other folks. Now there's Love Heywood, she's as 'toxicating to him as spirits is to me. I'll warrant she'll make his head spin like a top, and his eyes dance in his head like bobbins, and bejuggle him so he can't neither

stand nor go—and he'll feel so nice ! but he'll be sober enough when he finds by-and-by what a jack she's made on him. And yet I 'spose I may talk till I'm tired before he'll give her up—however, I'll try, for he's a good lad, and means well by me, and if I can stand it six months, why so I can longer."

In the mean time, Allen, little suspecting the liberal construction of his envoy, proceeded to the elm walk. It was a sweet retired spot, which led from the village, across a part of the rich meadow-land which bounded a pretty fantastic stream. The long descending branches of the elms to which it owed its distinction, almost interlacing from the opposite sides, swept gracefully over a narrow and not much frequented road, at the side of which ran a path, even at noonday, cool and shaded. This terminated in a rustic bridge, and in an unobstructed view of the smiling landscape—varied with mountain, mead, hill, and river, spire, school-house, and dwellings ; from the far-seen white mansion of the substantial farmer to the humble gray shelter of the day-labourer ; some occupying the little eminences that relieved the uniformity of the plain, others clustering in the heart of the valley.

Having reached the walk, Allen paced it slowly

through, glad to find it solitary, and stopping occasionally to listen for a soft approaching step ; but none such fell on his ear.

At length, weary of moving to and fro, impatience succeeded to expectation. He emerged from the walk, and leaning on the side of the bridge, strove to lose the time in a farewell glance at objects becoming more dear as he was again about to leave them.

The golden hues of the west had faded away, and a moon which, though in the wane, yet, like a beautiful woman just past her prime, gave no token of decline, was advancing to hold her court in a cloudless sky. Here and there a star was lighting its silver lamp, and timidly twinkling forth almost extinguished in her beams, like courtiers scarcely perceived in the presence of their "maiden queen." The mountains that closed around the little valley were reflected so strongly and distinctly against the clear horizon, that it seemed as if every individual tree that crested their summits might be discerned. The stream, as far as the eye could trace its winding course, reflected from its unruffled surface the sweet face of heaven. No rude sound interrupted the quiet hour. The soft ripple of the gentle current breaking against the piers of the bridge, or slightly

fretting on the mass of rocks that formed its abutment, added by its monotony to the deep repose.

"There," said Allen, "is the field in which I first drove the plough; there the meadow in which I have often turned the hay; and in the 'noon-spell,' resting under the shade of that large button-wood, have practised with George Williams the last new psalm-tune. There, too, I once had a quarrel with Ben Wright for disturbing the cradle-nest of a med-lark. Poor Ben! not far from there, too, he was drowned—how well I remember the diving for him! and how all the village, old and young, thronged to see him, and tried to revive the poor boy; and how grieved I was to think that I'd ever said a harsh word to him about the bird's nest. Yonder winds the path by which I used to drive our old crumpled horn to pasture. There, on that point, there used to be an old dried tree, that had fallen into the stream, and the waters broke over it into a pretty little ripple: I recollect it because I once saw a shy kingfisher sitting on it; and was amused to see how the habits of the bird had given rise to the saying, that 'the kingfisher kills every tree he lights on.' Off that bank was the favourite fishing-place; and there I've often baited my hook—little thinking

that I should one day be caught myself, like a silly fish !”

Brought by this reflection to the present, Allen paused—“ Can it be,” resumed he, “ that I have come hither to disturb and wound one who, till lately, seemed the very spirit of this scene—as kind as that blessed moon, as free from cloud as the clear sky above me !”

The twilight wore away, “ the hour of dews” came, and the shades of night gathered round ; but a deeper shade of uncertainty and disappointment fell on Allen.

“ She surely would not refuse to meet me !” thought he : “ I told her I should go to-morrow ; I asked it only on the score of old and true *friendship* :” but still she came not. Willing yet to frame an excuse for her, he repeated to himself, “ She may have been prevented ; perhaps she has some scruple of delicacy. I will seek her at home ; I ought, perhaps, to have done so at first.”

Turning as he spoke, he left the bridge, and hastened in the direction of Mr. Heywood’s. In approaching the house, he passed by a thick group of shumach and elders, which had been carelessly permitted to flourish on the outside of a fence skirting his premises, and forming one side of the little door-yard. The white house lay broadly in

the sweet moonlight—the low roof, the dormer-windows, the irregular outline, the well-sweep, softened into the picturesque by the magic effect of light and shade ; and through the bushes which rose above his head Allen could perceive on the door-steps, beneath the trellised arch, a female figure, whose white dress was relieved against the dark coat of a gentleman reclining at her feet. They spoke in a loud and merry key ; and Allen was so near, though unobserved, that without effort or intention he overheard them distinctly ; and ascertained them to be, as he of course had suspected, Love and Mr. Davenport.

“ Poor fellow ! ” said Charles, who had chanced to see Allen bending his course towards the elm walk, and who, from mere raillery, affected to believe what had indeed been the fact ; “ poor Prescott ! I’ll lay my life he is this moment waiting on the bridge expecting you to appear ; talking to the moon, and ‘ chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies,’ like all mal-treated swains. I protest, Love, you are too cruel ! How can you let him languish thus in fruitless expectation ? ”

“ Ridiculous ! ” replied she, concealing under an assumed mirth and indifference her real interest, “ he will wait long enough if he waits for me.”

Allen heard no more. It was plain that she

had not only disregarded his request, but had exposed it with indelicate, unfeeling levity to Charles, and he had been made the sport of both. Hurrying from a spot where he had already learned enough to leave Love without excuse, he now impatiently anticipated the moment of his departure; and having reached home, occupied himself with haste and perturbation in the remaining preparations for it. His mother, whose apprehensions in regard to Love had been quieted by his late apparent indifference, imputed his agitation to a natural regret at leaving herself; and, redoubling her endearments, strove to be cheerful for his sake. He was affected by an intention which he easily penetrated, and felt rebuked by her unsuspecting affection; but avoiding disclosures which could only pain both, he kissed her gratefully, and a few words of irritated, perhaps unreasonable, feeling escaped him.

"*You*, mother, at least, love me—*you* will never disappoint and despise me!"

"Despise you! dear Allen, what puts such a thought into your head? You are my crown and glory! who, indeed, could despise *you*?—but if all the world were to do so, you should only nestle the closer in my heart; wouldn't you always,

Allen, be sure of a hiding-place there from shame or sorrow?"

"Yes," said Allen, "always—but God forbid that I should ever bring either to that shelter!"


Some one has said that "the heart of a mother is the master-piece of Nature's works." It is at least that portion of them which least asks the aid of culture. She may require to be instructed how to govern, to punish, or to teach; but to *love*—through evil as well as good report—constantly, fervently, deeply, to the sacrifice of herself, even unto death,—what mother, if she is true to the instincts of her nature, does not know?

CHAPTER XXI.

"Mercy on me! I have great dispositions to cry."

Merry Wives of Windsor.

THE next morning, "before the birds had matins said," Allen was on his way from Westdale, where his abrupt departure excited various emotions. Mrs. Heywood, glad to be relieved from all interference with her favourite scheme, merely remarked, when the family were assembled at tea, "that the least Allen Prescott could have done was to call and bid 'good-by'—but it only proved there wasn't no dependence to be placed in some people;" to which her husband replied, that "he hadn't showed no more than a proper spirit; for he must say he didn't think he had lately been treated over-civil; he had only acted suitable and consistent, which was more than could be said for other folks;" and Love, silent, but surprised and distressed, escaped as soon as possible to her own room.



As she entered, the "viewless winds" swept over the simple harp which Allen had constructed for her, and a plaintive tone was produced. The emotions till now suppressed at this sound became uncontrollable, and bursting into tears, she exclaimed, "'Tis all over ! 'tis all over !—what a fool have I been !"

Then, listening with streaming eyes to the instrument, rendered eloquent by her own imagination, she continued, "He said, when he gave it to me, that 'when the west wind kissed it, I must think it spoke of him;' but what can it say except to reproach my folly and unkindness ? Oh, what a silly, silly girl have I been !"

Occupied thus in unavailing self-accusations and regrets, Love sat absorbed, till the voice of Charles, entering the house, and a summons from her mother, required her to appear below. Most gladly would she have been excused, for her heart now revolted against him as the means by which she had inflicted on herself suffering and mortification—but there was no escape ; and smoothing her hair, bathing her eyes, and calling up a forced gayety, she descended. She was not, however, so successful a dissembler as she hoped. Mrs. Heywood was vexed ; and Charles, though amused at efforts which did not deceive him, was sur-

prised into a sincere and natural emotion of pity at her ill-concealed distress. He began some light raillery on her cruelty, the despair of Allen, and his strange departure, but he saw it touched her too nearly; and soon perceiving that his presence was a restraint, considerably took his leave.

“Poor little thing!” thought he, as he walked away, “upon my soul I’m sorry for her. This comes of playing with edgetools—yet ‘the plot was a good plot, an excellent plot,’ with anybody but such a stiff piece of independence as this Allen, who, I have no doubt, considers his ‘constitutional rights’ invaded on this occasion. Hang him! a cold-blooded Yankee! he does not deserve that such a tender little heart should beat for him. I have half a mind to court the girl in earnest, to avenge her. ’Tis no fault of mine, however; on the contrary, ’twas rather kind in me, and certainly condescending, to submit to be made an instrument in such a piece of rustic manoeuvring. Who would have thought that the little soul would have taken it so to heart!—why, if she is so touched with *him*, what would she have been with *me*! ’Tis a mercy that I was not more tender; for, after all, there is no great pleasure in filling pretty eyes with tears. However, to be serious, I think I ought to atone for my share in this foolery; so


I'll e'en try, in simple good-will, to cheat her out of this melancholy mood."

But such compassionate feelings, as might be supposed, were short-lived ; for Love, listless and dissatisfied with herself, but indifferently rewarded his really kind efforts. The excitement and attraction he had hitherto found in her were gone ; and the period of his return home having arrived, to the mortification of Mrs. Heywood, who saw her castles demolished as easily as the card-houses of a child, he soon paid his leave-taking visit, "without any thing partic'lar passing between him and Love." To Love, indeed, this was a relief ; she was now spared the constraint of affecting to be gay while she felt miserable—and that at present was all she could expect.

Lindy Doble, in the mean time, who had been so mal-adroit a friend, had *her* troubles too. "Allen gone!—for the land's sake ! what was she to do with that dumb billet?"—dumb, indeed, while in her possession. Give it to Love she would not—right or wrong, *that* she was determined on—"for her to pass her jokes on't : give it to Miss Prescott she hadn't no authority to ; boys didn't never want their mothers to know nothing about such trash ; and *she* wasn't going to blow Allen, at no rate." The only course that remained was, to

keep it till she could send or give it to Allen himself.

Leaving our humble friends, we must for a while accompany Charles, who, though quite willing by this time to exchange the country for the city, nevertheless bore with him a pleased and grateful recollection of the kindness with which he had been treated; and during his solitary ride pondered, perhaps as philosophically as most young men in his condition would have done, on the comparative advantages of unsophisticated and artificial life. But the glittering spires of the city, the hum of men, the gay objects which passed before him, the throng of life and business, disturbed the balance he was so profoundly adjusting; and when, on stopping at his uncle's door, he was ushered into a brilliant circle, a confusion of mind came over him, like that which accompanies a sudden start from the illusions of a dream to the realities of the waking world. Now, though some may be inclined to reverse this position, and think that the tranquil, undisturbed existence in which he had recently borne a part was in fact the only substance worth contending for, and that the glare, the competition, the superfluities to which he had returned were shadows all; so thought not Charles, nor was it right he should.



To him the former was but a life of idle enjoyment; he had returned to one in which lay his occupations and duties—these he was bound to separate from the frivolities and false appearances with which they were not necessarily associated.

It is true that in a process of such nice discrimination Charles was not yet remarkably successful. He felt, indeed, something like shame at his late loitering life, when he heard again the tone and the topics of the world: but in this revulsion of feeling he as usual went too far; and half-subdued prejudices reviving, he almost wondered that he could have been so happy under such circumstances. Yet he was not ungrateful, and would have blistered his tongue before it should have uttered a sentiment derogatory to Westdale, over which Miss Calender and Love Heywood were alone sufficient to shed a hue of refinement.

Mr. Wallace, who had watched his nephew's character with solicitude, perceived in it a prevalence of good which led him to hope much from the future, notwithstanding habits of self-indulgence and defects of judgment that frequently offended him at present. Though fond of him, he esteemed him justly; and saw, that with more than ordinary kindness of temper, and no deficiency of intellectual gifts, he was like a thousand

others, who, born to the smiles of fortune, are content to bask idly in its sunshine; but who, if roused or compelled to exertion, often exhibit qualities which, whether latent or acquired, render them far more respectable than any adventitious distinctions. He was curious to ascertain the effect on Charles of his late visit and new associations. Having himself passed much time in Westdale when a youth, with his class-mate, a son of Col. Callender, he was quite at home in the society, and glad to observe, in reply to his inquiries after old acquaintances, that his nephew, with a good-humoured perception of what was ludicrous or peculiar, had a just appreciation of their sense and virtues.

But where Mr. Wallace would have deduced from these admissions a confirmation of some of his cherished opinions—his “pestilent republicanism,” as Charles called it,—his nephew would not yield an inch; replying to all he could urge, “Westdale is no rule, uncle; Westdale is an Arcadia! You may as well take Philips’s pastorals as a specimen of English country life, as to assert that that little gem of a village is a sample of the happy effect of your favourite notions.”

Mr. Wallace smiled and shook his head.

“Though you may be inclined just now, Charles,

to regard Westdale with peculiar favour, depend on it, that all which gives it real respectability has its rise in institutions you are not yet wise enough heartily to admire. However, you are beginning to see more clearly; and I have hopes of you. Your tone is yet somewhat too aristocratic and exclusive; and you have rather too much an air of condescension in your commendation; but by-and-by you will do better. You will then find," continued Mr. Wallace, more seriously, "in the labouring class (a distinction growing every day more respectable), not only a practical good sense, a susceptibility of refined and generous emotions, but a patriotism, a true estimate of our blessings as a people, and of our individual responsibilities, and on subjects of national interest a justness of thinking, of which you are now little aware. You profess to love your country; but learn, my dear fellow, to reduce this abstract idea to the practical test of love of countrymen—not a sympathy with a select few having the same advantages and pursuits with yourself; your heart must warm to every one who worthily bears the name of an American! and must sincerely approve of those institutions by which you as an individual are rendered of comparatively small importance, while the mass is elevated."

Charles made no reply ; but as it has been our fortune to observe, that though similar wholesome teaching does not always take immediate effect, it is not ultimately lost, we shall leave him for the present, with the hope that the efforts of his uncle to rectify his opinions were not finally unavailing.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Plumes of pride, and wings of vanity."

Fairy Queen. }

"Silent chose awhile to sit,

Then enter boldly by some lucky hit."—CRABBE.

THE events of the three following years require no very minute chronicle, although some of our characters had, in military phrase, "taken up new positions." Allen was advanced to the honours and privileges of a "Counsellor at Law;" and Charles Davenport, induced by the suggestions of his uncle, had manfully turned his back on the allurements of a city, and was pursuing his profession in a part of the State wherein lay a considerable portion of his property; where objects of honourable ambition and opportunities of usefulness presenting themselves, unattended by those seductions of indolence and frivolity which, as he was so frank as to acknowledge, he could not altogether resist, he was convinced he ought to

flee. Yet, though we may thus briefly dismiss what is properly the business part of our story, the sentimental requires a more delicate and deliberate treatment. Under this head must of course be placed whatever relates to affairs of the heart, prosperous or otherwise, which brings us by a natural transition to—Love Heywood. Poor girl! she had paid dearly for her experiment on hearts. But though the sentiment she entertained for Allen was genuine and fervent, there mingled with the suffering its disappointment had occasioned, emotions as natural, perhaps, but less entitled to sympathy. Even in gentle natures vanity is found to be a restive, intractable principle, requiring reiterated admonition. As the first violence of her feeling subsided, she exchanged the tone of self-reproach for one of recrimination—“What had she done, after all? She was sure Allen was the first to change; and if he chose to be stiff and disagreeable, why shouldn't she be civil to Mr. Davenport?” Such extenuation, too, found able support in the counsels of her mother; who, foiled and disappointed, participated in the feelings of Love, though directed against a different object. Vexed with herself, her anger found relief in petty abuse of Charles; and while she secretly suspected the real state of her daughter's

affections, she charged her "not to let folks think that that great gentleman, as he thought himself, had jilted her; and, instead of hanging her head like a bulrush, to put a fair face on't—that there were as good fish in the sea as ever were caught," with sundry other consolatory observations.

At first Love listened to little profit. Too seriously grieved to be influenced by such prudential considerations, though she received the anxious hortatives of her mother in silence, she compensated herself by mentally saying, "She did not mind what people said—she had never cared for Mr. Davenport, and now she perfectly hated him." By degrees, however, her womanly pride took the alarm; for, though indifferent to whatever related to him, she was vulnerable to remark in regard to another. The efforts thus excited were not unsuccessful; and a change that took place in their little society aided in restoring the tone of her mind.

The worthy pastor of Westdale, full of years, was gathered to his fathers, and a new minister was "settled." At any time, in a New-England village, such an event is regarded as of paramount importance; but there were circumstances in the present instance which caused a sensation even greater than usual. Mr. Dalton, the successor of

Mr. Wheaton, was a man in the prime of life, of good appearance, a widower with but one child, a boy of three years old. Far be it from us to underrate his real merits, or to derogate from the dignity of his office ; reasons sufficient to justify all the interest manifested on the occasion. But it may still without offence be suggested, that there are in all congregations certain of the more worldly sort, whose zeal for the good of the church does not render them entirely indifferent to their personal advantage—certain “mothers in Israel,” and “daughters in Zion,” whose views are not altogether spiritual.

To this calculating class it will naturally be suspected that Mrs. Heywood belonged ; but justice requires that Love be not included in the same condemnation. Her mind, originally like her father's, direct and ingenuous, was not essentially infected by the influence of her mother ; and was only seduced by her into a partial co-operation when blinded by vanity or affection, never by any cold calculations of interest. Love, though

“ ————— gay and light,
Had still a secret bias to the right ;
Vain as she was—and flattery made her vain,
Her simulation gave her bosom pain.”

So far from entering into her mother's devices, she, with singular irreverence, was more sensible of certain peculiarities of manner in their new pastor,—the consequence of his retired habits,—than was becoming, considering their respective relations. On this point, indeed, thanks to her acquaintance with Mr. Davenport, and occasional introductions to others of Miss Calender's guests, Love had a standard somewhat different from that of most of her young companions, one to which Mr. Dalton would perhaps have been as unwilling as he was unable to conform. All levity, however, on this subject Mrs. Heywood with exemplary propriety discouraged; and Love, finding that no one laughed at her jokes, learned at length to view the object of them with due respect.

Mrs. Heywood was not alone in her maternal aspirings. Others conceived like designs; but her genius or her fortune so far prevailed as to furnish her facilities denied to them. As his intended residence was not in readiness to receive him, Mr. Dalton was obliged for the present to "live at board;" and many were emulous of the privilege of taking him into their families till his own house should be completed. But while this matter was in debate, Mrs. Heywood, like a skilful general, who advances often more surely by a

zigzag approach, begged to take his child, reflecting that an occasional intercourse for an object of common interest was more likely to effect her purpose than associating daily in the ordinary way; besides being less liable to remark and counteraction. The result was such as to justify the *manœuvre*. Visits, at first made to inquire after and to fondle his son, were soon rendered more frequent from gratitude to his pretty young friend—a sentiment that Love very innocently ministered to, by her unaffected kindness to the child.

One circumstance, however, threatened to frustrate the designs of Mrs. Heywood. Mr. Dalton was known to call frequently at Mr. Norris's, and had been heard to commend the prudence and piety of Mary. Now, whatever else Love might be allowed to be, Mrs. Heywood was conscious that by no figure of speech could she be said to be "prudent" or "pious;" and if these were a *sine qua non*, as she was constrained to admit they ought to be, she justly feared another discomfiture. "But then," she reflected, "Love was young enough to mend;" and if by any possibility she could make her avoid certain topics of dangerous discussion, be decently staid, and properly attentive to subjects Mr. Dalton was fond of introducing,

she flattered herself, that as in a comparison with Mary Norris the balance of beauty and attraction was on the side of Love, human infirmity would carry the day; and that she should see her daughter promoted to the honourable station of "Madam of the parish." But Love was incorrigible. She seemed even perversely to endeavour to appear more worldly and frivolous in the presence of Mr. Dalton than at any other time; would argue pertinaciously in support of her favourite amusements, was certain at least half the time to absent herself from the weekly conference, and would let the most trifling obstacle detain her from any extra service. Her mother was at her wit's end, and the admiration of Mr. Dalton began to cool, when the wicked spirit of rivalry was called up in the breast of Love, and a tart observation of Patty Pearson effected that for which Mrs. Heywood had laboured in vain.

"Love Heywood, indeed!" exclaimed Patty; "Mr. Dalton would never think of *her*! and she wasn't the only one who thought so; no, no, Mary Norris was the girl *he'd* choose—*she* was the proper wife for him; but Love Heywood! what minister would ever think of *her*!"

We have no wish to extenuate the faults of our poor little heroine—they were too glaring to be

softened ; but, like the judge who charged the jury strongly in favour of a man who, though innocent of the alleged offence, had a notoriously bad character, assigning as a reason that "he had no reputation to spare," so we must be tender of hers, as far as truth will permit, aware that she cannot afford to sustain an unfounded accusation. It is but fair, therefore, to say, that she conceived no deliberate plan of ensnaring Mr. Dalton, nor had she any malignant purpose of interfering with another. She was actuated alone by a resentful feeling towards those who had placed her in such odious contrast to Mary Norris, and a vague desire to convict them of "being much mistaken." Yet it is certain, that though such might have been the limit of her wishes, her conduct was not equally restrained. The good man, who, if let alone, would probably have obeyed his better judgment, and have sought the favour of Mary Norris, was so caught by Love's bewitching ways, that he was completely puzzled. While in this mood circumstances occurred that helped him to a decision. His little boy became dangerously ill, and every moment that could be spared from his other duties he passed in his sick-room, dividing with Love the care of attending him. Anxiety for the child, to whom she had become attached, a sense of re-

sponsibility, and compassion for the father, extinguished for the time all Love's projects ; and she became without an effort the rational, kind, considerate being which, except when under some foreign influence, she always was. All schemes of retaliation, all desires of conquest were forgotten ; and it was not till little Edward was convalescing that she perceived that the gratitude of his father had assumed a tender character. Indifferent herself, however, she, like most conquerors, estimated her victory rather by the loss to others than its value to herself,—the only emotion it excited being an unworthy, though perhaps natural feeling of triumph over Miss Patty Pearson, and the satisfaction of acknowledged superiority to Mary Norris.

Matters had advanced thus far at the period to which we have brought our story, the course of which again reverts to Allen. Disappointed where he had placed his hopes, deceived where he had trusted, he had returned to his labours spiritless and unhappy. But though the vision that had hitherto flitted before him, at once a motive and recompense, no longer stimulated him, he was fortunately not in a situation to become the victim of sentiment. If wounded in his affections, his ambition was easily rekindled. Advanced

now another grade in his profession, he applied himself to it with even increased activity ; and, furnished with an introduction to an old friend of Mr. Evans, he prepared to make his first appearance as counsellor at the approaching session of the Supreme Court in Utica.

Hitherto Allen had known little but the drudgery of his profession ; he was now to take a higher stand—yet he was neither elated nor apprehensive. His mind was too serious for vanity, too well balanced for timidity. If he had done much, more remained to be done, while the success that had hitherto attended his efforts afforded a reasonable belief that he should not ultimately fail.

Arrived in Utica, he found Mr. Moreton, the friend referred to, indisposed, but not too ill for conversation. He received Allen with cordiality, spoke of the coming term as one of much interest, and assured Allen that his arrival was very opportune. "One case in particular," continued he, "I have much at heart, and to be flat on my back when I am most wanted is rather too much for my patience ; the more so, as we have little but good luck to depend on. Perhaps, however, 'tis all for the best, and Fortune, like other females, may be more propitious to you, a young man, than to an old fellow like myself."

Allen professed his zeal, if not his ability, to serve him, and Mr. Moreton proceeded to the circumstances of the case in question ; which, to save time, we will more briefly relate.

Some years previously, Mr. Belden, a man of fortune, had married a lady, on whom, at the time of her marriage, her own property, which was considerable, was settled in lieu of dower. This, by misfortune, had dwindled to nearly nothing ; and her husband, then as affectionate as at first, made a will, by which he provided for her very generously. Mr. Belden had subsequently fallen into habits of intemperance. The remonstrances of his wife produced no other effect than to irritate, and finally alienate him. About this time his nephew, coming to reside with them, and perceiving the declining influence of his wife, formed the design of inducing him to cut her off, and to leave to himself whatever might remain of his estate. Vicious indulgence induced disease and imbecility ; his wife, though under his roof, was banished from his presence, and no one allowed to approach him but his nephew, and a young man employed as a sort of spy and attendant, wholly in the interests of this nephew. Under such circumstances

was easy to frame a will to serve their purposes, without conscience, though lulled, in a moment of re-

morse after a violent paroxysm of disease, resumed its rights. Accidentally placed in a room adjoining her husband's, whence the sounds reached her, Mrs. Belden overheard a conversation, in which her husband, too ill to execute his own wishes, directed his attendant to open a certain desk, take from it his last will, to which this same person had been a witness, and throw it into the fire. "Observe," continued Mr. Moreton, "she not only heard these instructions, but she also distinctly heard the noise of the keys, the turning of one in the lock, and also the sound of the tongs, as if thrusting the paper under the coals. The miserable man was only spared to perform this act of justice—a few days terminated his existence, when, to the surprise and consternation of his wife, a will was produced by the nephew, appointing him his sole heir.

"The validity of this will we are to contest. You, who probably regard it merely as a question of legal right, cannot enter into the feelings that prevail among us, where the merits of Mrs. Belden, the former character of her husband, his lamentable delusion, and the suspicion of foul play, have excited the greatest interest in the issue. That Reynolds and young Belden are both rascals, I have no doubt; but the proof may be difficult."

"Reynolds!" repeated Allen, "from where does he come?"

"Heaven knows," replied Mr. Moreton; "all that I can say is, that his name is James Reynolds."

"James Reynolds!" again repeated Allen; "what is he in appearance and age?"

"The first, nothing very striking,—rather decent and good-looking; about twenty-six, or so,—with a sleek smooth kind of manner, which may as well be good-nature as duplicity."

Allen suppressed his suspicions. There might, he reflected, be two men of the same name and appearance, neither being remarkable; and he did not feel himself at liberty, at present, to expose the delinquencies of his former companion.

Instructions in regard to this, and other business, now followed, till Allen returned to his inn. Here was a motley collection of counsellors and attorneys, and those hangers-on, who some from idleness, others from love of excitement, are found at such places at these seasons; and among whom, Allen, with a readiness and self-possession not incompatible with modesty, succeeded in recommending himself to new acquaintances.

At ten the next morning the court opened. A short time was occupied in some other matters;

when the attention of the court was requested, in order to proceed to the proof of the will of the late George Belden.

As soon as the case was known to be coming on, the numbers that pressed into the house testified the interest it excited.

A gentleman, the counsel for the party claiming under the will, rose, and presented it for proof. The first two witnesses, men of good character and standing, were called, and having made their attestation, the third was summoned.

"The very man!" thought Allen, as a person about his own age, with a good-humoured but indirect and rather servile aspect, presented himself; "I should know him among a thousand." With apparent self-possession, in which, however, Allen thought he perceived some effort, he advanced, took the oath, and testified to the due execution of the will, and to his own signature.

It was now Allen's turn. He rose, and having alleged the reason of Mr. Moreton's absence, stated that he had been directed by him to oppose the proof of this will. "And now," continued he, "if it please the court, I beg to be permitted to interrogate the young man who has last testified."

Reynolds, with an undaunted front, presented himself.

Allen was glad to perceive by the expression of his countenance, that either from alterations in his own appearance, or the solicitude inseparable from the iniquitous conduct he felt himself to be pursuing, he had not yet recognised him. On the first effect of his surprise, knowing his deficiency of nerve, Allen had chiefly calculated ; and he proceeded, in the tone of common inquiry—

“What is your name?”

“James Reynolds.”

“What is your native place?”

“C——, in the county of ——.”

“Were you, in the year ——, in the employ of Mr. Forbes, merchant in that town?”

Witness did not remember the year, but believed that he was.

“Did you know, when there, a lad named Allen Prescott?”

During these interrogatories the face of the witness assumed a troubled and perplexed expression ; in reply to the last, he hesitated—and then said, “I do not recollect—”

“James Reynolds!” said Allen, suddenly changing his voice, fixing his eye immoveably on him, and speaking with an intonation that he had on one memorable occasion used towards him, “James Reynolds ! shall I assist your recollection ?—were

you ever saved from death, when walking in your sleep—and by whom ?”

The witness remained silent.

“ Were you ever saved from worse destruction ?” continued Allen in the same tone, “ and by whom ?”

The confident brow of the witness fell, his cheek changed, but he still remained silent ; yet, as if spell-bound, could not withdraw his eye from the gaze of Allen, to whom it was sufficiently apparent that he was now recognised. “ James Reynolds,” continued Allen, “ by that which is past, though, I see, well remembered—by the account you shall render to God, I ask you if you have kept back aught that you know concerning this instrument ?”

The witness essayed to speak, but the words were indistinct ; and after pausing a moment to give him time, Allen again proceeded.

“ Were you not directed by the late George Belden to destroy that will which has just been proved, his intention being that a former one in favour of his wife should stand ? and did you not, on the contrary, to secure the bounty of the party to be benefited by this your act, burn the very will he intended to preserve ?”

Here the lawyer on the opposite side, who had

listened with much impatience, interposed, with a complaint of brow-beating, irregular proceedings, reflections on the honour of his client ; but the witness was in no condition to catch at the support thus extended. Shrinking from the searching eye of Allen, who never for an instant relaxed his scrutiny, he turned pale, his limbs failed, and at length, unable longer to endure his situation, the general gaze, the breathless attention, he exclaimed, pointing with a tremulous hand to Allen, "I cannot lie to that man !" then retreating from his conspicuous station, he sunk into the first vacant seat. His agitation, his few but expressive words, had told the whole—villany was defeated, virtue redressed, and a murmur of approbation pervaded the house ; which subsided but to be renewed, when the counsel for the claimant came forward, and expressing his indignation at having been, however unintentionally, involved in so unworthy a proceeding, withdrew the case.

We will not further detain the reader in courts of law. Allen left the house to report his success to Mr. Moreton, and the defeated parties made their escape amid the hisses of the crowd.

The satisfaction of Mr. Moreton may be easily conceived. Shaking Allen's hand, he cordially

congratulated him, saying he should make him personally acquainted with his client, who was still sufficiently young and handsome to engage his admiration, protesting also that he should pocket the undivided fee. His first offer Allen willingly accepted—it is impossible to be indifferent to one we have served ; but the last he resolutely refused—averring he had done nothing, and deserved nothing—that a circumstance entirely fortuitous had alone enabled him to be useful—and declining even a share of the compensation. This conduct confirmed the impression he had already made, and secured the future good offices of Mr. Moreton. Nor was this all. Although there had been in reality no proof of legal knowledge, no professional acuteness discernible in the conduct of Allen in this transaction, yet a certain *éclat* followed it. He had defeated an infamous combination, the subsequent disclosures of Reynolds himself made known the former generous conduct of Allen, and he had shown himself superior to merely pecuniary considerations. Altogether, an impression was made, which was justified, not only by the moral qualities, but by the real ability of the individual ; and afforded that which was alone necessary to his success—a fair opportunity of

showing what he was. From this time his star continued to ascend; friends and business followed, and Allen Prescott began to be considered as a "rising young man."

CHAPTER XXIII.

———It would have galled his nature,
Which easily endures not article
Tying him to aught.

SHAKESPEARE.

MRS. HEYWOOD, meanwhile, was not slow in perceiving the impression that Love had made on Mr. Dalton. Her next concern was to ensure a correspondent feeling on her part, of which she was rather dubious. With her accustomed pertinacity, she pressed towards her object; and, in order to strengthen the battery she was preparing against her daughter, deemed it best to confer with her husband. Availing herself, therefore, of one of those moments of sunshine which, notwithstanding the malignant insinuations of scoffers, do sometimes gleam athwart the troubled sky of matrimony, and of which skilful wives know so well to take advantage, she opened her attack with, "Well, Mr. Heywood, I feel as if we have good reason to be pleased with our minister."

"Yes," replied he; "I have nothing to object against him. He's a likely man."

"If he was only suited, now, with a good wife, to keep his new house in order, things would be about right."

"He may get that for asking, I dare say; there are no empty seats in the choir now, as there used to be in poor Mr. Wheaton's time."

Mrs. Heywood laughed approvingly. "And perhaps, after all," said she, "he'll take one that nobody mistrusts. To come to the point, Mr. Heywood, I think he has a notion for our Love."

Mr. Heywood, who, as usual, saw more than his wife supposed, had already made his own private observations to the same effect, but not with the same satisfaction. He was more capable of a wise and disinterested judgment in the matter, and had the welfare of the church at heart, as well as that of his own family. He was aware that such a choice would not be deemed judicious; and he held that a minister, in such an affair, was almost as much bound to please his people as a king was to consult his subjects.

"Why, Miss Heywood," said he, after a short pause, "I must say, if so be it is so, that it is a notion I should be sorry to have go any further. Love is a good girl, in her way, and will, I dare say, come to years of discretion at last—if she lives long enough,—all fruit doesn't ripen at the same

time : but, as to being a minister's wife *now*, why, she is no more fit for it than a weathercock is for a guide-board ! No, no,—it isn't consistent, Miss Heywood—it isn't consistent."

"Why, now, Mr. Heywood !—that is just like one of your notions," replied his wife. "I am sure, Love is quite changed, to what she used to be."

"Yes, but not much wiser, I guess. Disappointment sometimes works a cure, and sometimes only aggravates. Your eyes, Betsey, were always handsomer to look at than mine, I'm free to own ; but they ain't always sharper. 'Tis plain enough what has sobered her,—and you too, wife. Allen Prescott isn't a lad to be caught in a trap ; and young Davenport, though none of the 'cutest, was too keen for you. Ah, Miss Heywood ! you missed a figure that time !"

Mrs. Heywood, who especially disliked all reference to a period in her history so little creditable to her sagacity, evaded it by resuming the original thread of her discourse. "*She* did not see why Love might not be a minister's wife. Surely, ministers' wives were not perfect !"

"No," replied he ; "no more than other men's wives. But I'll go a little further with you, Miss Heywood. I don't object against this only because

Love is not a professor, but because it is against her natur'. There's a great many kinds of goodness, Betsey ; and the same person who would be good in one situation would be as ugly as Cain in another. Love is a kind-tempered, pleasant girl, that will make a good wife to a man that she loves, and who has the same ways with herself, and who would keep rather a slack hand with her ; and, after a while, when her spirits had worked off a little, she'd make a good, reasonable woman. But set her down now, where she'd think she must be on her best behaviour, that everybody was marking her, that she mustn't say this, or do that, or go there ; and she'd be contrary to her husband, and every one else. Now, this is partly her natur', partly your fault, Miss Heywood : you know she's been a kind of an idol with you, and had too much her own head. If you had meant her for a minister's wife, you should have tutored her different ; you should have made less account of outward adorning, and more of inward grace ; not but what this is good for all women ; but ministers' wives, in a special sense, should be self-denied, humble, patient, kind, bearing and forbearing,—a sort of living pictur' of all their husbands preach up : because, you know, Betsey," continued he, in a mollifying tone, "you women-folks are

better than we men ; and, therefore, when a minister cannot, by reason of infirmity, be a pattern himself, he should be able to say, 'Look at my wife !' "

"As to '*kind*,'" said Mrs. Heywood, fastening on a quality in his enumeration which, with justice, she thought could not be denied to Love, "I am sure nobody is kinder than Love,—she'll work or watch for any one."

† "Ay, but she should be able to pray, as well as watch," said Mr. Heywood ; "be able, not only to give the sick doctor's stuff for their bodies, but balsam for their souls. She ought to be as skilful in healing their spiritual wounds as her husband is faithful in probing them. They must be fellow-workers, for the good of their people—their joint people ; and when he is tired and beat out with studying and preaching, and discouraged because of sin and folly, she must never be down-hearted. Like Gideon, though '*faint*,' she must still '*be pursuing* ;' must bear his burthens for him ; and always have a smile ready to break in on the darkest hour. There's nothing to a man, Betsey, like a woman's cheerful smile ; 'tis as welcome as a fine day in harvest."

Here his wife replied, with some signs of impatience, "Well, but, Mr. Heywood, you would not

surely object if they wished it themselves: it would be like turning against your own child!"


"I can't help that, Miss Heywood; I should, like an honest man, say what I thought: if that wouldn't hinder, why, they must take the consequences."

Mrs. Heywood, if disappointed as to her husband's co-operation, had, at least, ascertained what ground she stood on; and as his objections had small weight with herself, she naturally concluded they would have still less with the parties,—provided, always, that they were sufficiently interested. With respect to Mr. Dalton, this was soon proved to her satisfaction; but Love appeared, as yet, untouched. Mrs. Heywood argued, flattered, and manœuvred with untiring perseverance, and again fortune befriended her. As is common, in cases where a lady and gentleman are concerned, rumour had taken liberties with Allen and his fair client. He had been so lucky as to be of service to a handsome widow; young, and well provided for. This had led to a personal acquaintance, and that to further intercourse by letter on matters of business. All this was true; and from this—considering the proneness of people, in such cases, to arrange the probable issues—it is not strange, that, by the time it reached Westdale, he was reputed

the lady's accepted lover ; a report which Allen either had not heard, or deemed of too little consequence to contradict. Far different was its impression on Love. Every imagination that had consoled the present, or gilded the future, vanished ; and she was left to deplore anew, not only her own disappointment, but also what she indignantly deemed the debasement of Allen, who, according to her construction, had little better than sold himself.

Easily comprehending the feelings of her daughter, and knowing that none could be more propitious to a new lover, Mrs. Heywood lost no time in turning them to the advantage of Mr. Dalton ; and, with the usual precipitancy of pique and mortification, Love was drawn into a favourable hearing of his serious proposals.

While Mrs. Heywood was rejoicing in the success of her small politics, our friend Allen was about to engage in those of a larger sphere. In so doing, however, he was not actuated by a restless desire of distinction, or of more rapid acquisition. For the latter, he was a believer, with Paley, "that there is more happiness in the pursuit than in the possession of fortune ;" and for political reputation, he saw, young as he was, through the false glare by which it was attended,—




the toil, mortifications, and sacrifices by which it was often obtained. Yet Allen had no romance in regard to wealth,—no fastidiousness on the subject of office: the former he held himself bound, even by his religion, patiently to labour for; the latter, as a citizen, not permitted always to reject; regarding both as among the means to a useful life. Such were his prevailing feelings: at his age, and in his condition, it was scarcely to be expected that he should be, at all times, superior to the incitements of a less noble ambition.

With the mutations of party that have taken place in the "empire state," it is neither safe nor proper to encumber our little story; but it may be permitted, all unskilled as we are, so far to touch on this subject as is necessary to the design of the narrative. Political opinions are no invariable test of character; founded, as they often are, on distinctions not of intrinsic morality,—influenced by the accidents of birth and association, and adopted often at an age least fitted for dispassionate decision. But, though such circumstances had originally affected the opinions of Allen, they had subsequently been subjected to a calm revision. He had, at first, naturally, and without much consideration, sympathized most with those who claimed, sometimes honestly, sometimes with

sinister designs, to be pre-eminently the friends of the people : yet, on further reflection, it seemed, to his humble philosophy, that our two great schools of politics, Federalism and Democracy, might have been equally beneficial,—furnishing the checks and balances of our system. He saw that they had been mutually misconstrued and misrepresented,—that, in individual instances, party spirit had been aggravated by personal hatred—by corruption and selfishness,—yet that the wise, the good, the patriotic had been found on both sides. Such views, though still adhering to his original choice, served to preserve him from party rancour, and his democracy from the admixture of bad passions.

The time had now come when Allen was to assume the responsibility of acting on the principles he had adopted ; he having been nominated candidate for member of the Assembly by that party which, under whatever modifications, acted on what they called the “old republican ground.”—He affected no indifference on the subject ; but his friend Mr. Evans was more unrestrained in the expression of his satisfaction. Besides his personal interest in all that related to Allen, he had a decided taste for the excitement of an election. The day succeeding the nomination, as he was



discussing the matter with Allen *en amateur*,—making his calculations as to the returns from the several towns—going over and over the ground, which at every review presented fewer obstacles as he, from time to time, transferred the uncertain votes, which in his cooler moments he had rejected, to the sum total on which he fondly relied,—a deputation from a number of their republican friends entered. Among these, some had insisted on the right to exact a pledge from their candidate, on a subject of general political interest; and it was on this point that the persons mentioned had been sent to sound Allen. With some circumlocution and professions of personal regard, intermingled with intimations of doubts of his election, unsupported by themselves, they made known the conditions on which alone this support would be afforded. Allen listened with a quiet civility, which seemed to promise acquiescence, but did not leave them long in ignorance.

“We will not, gentlemen,” replied he, “discuss the measures you would direct me to promote; I might or might not argue with you as to their expediency: my rejection of your proposition rests on other grounds.”

Mr. Evans looked disturbed—the deputation surprised. They had not anticipated resistance

from a young man whom they very naturally supposed would be but too happy to be thus brought into notice. They re-stated, attempted to rectify some supposed misconception, and again hinted at the necessity of their support to his success.

Allen allowed them to proceed; but, having heard them through, replied, "I believe I am now fully acquainted with your views, gentlemen. It would ill become me to be unmindful of the honour you are willing to confer on me; neither am I at all disposed to question the importance of your support: but, be its value what it may, I cannot secure it by the subserviency required. I never will," continued he, with emphasis, "by declaration or implication, limit the exercise of my first privilege as a man and a citizen,—the right to express my sentiments without pledge, test, or fear: to do so would be to violate the freedom I hold myself bound to defend."

From the look and manner of Allen there was no appeal. The deputation rose to depart, not without a smile at his impracticability; but Mr. Evans, alarmed for his success, could no longer be silent,—"begged them not to be precipitate"—talked of "time for consideration—was sure nothing offensive could be intended, on the part of

the gentlemen—and was equally sure that Mr. Prescott might see the matter in a different light.” But Allen, who, from the height on which he had placed himself, surveyed the whole ground, was not to be moved.

“I thank you, sir,” said he, “for your zeal in my service, but my decision is as little likely to be changed as the instructions of these gentlemen are to be withdrawn. You understand me, therefore,” added he, addressing them, “to renounce explicitly all expectations from the persons you represent; but I am not the less resolved to try the event of the election. Should I succeed or fail, I shall congratulate myself on my present course.”

The deputation retreated, leaving Allen self-possessed, Mr. Evans full of chagrin and apprehension. Nor was he quite free from vexation at Allen himself, which annoyed him the more that he was ashamed to betray it, and to reprove conduct which in heart he could not condemn. In proportion to his too sanguine expectations was the present counteraction; and he felt much like a man who, after betting largely on a favourite racer, sees symptoms of failure on the first heat.

The behaviour of Allen on this occasion was of course regarded variously: some pronounced it folly and “want of consistency;” some approved,

and resolved to give him a more hearty support; while others shrugged their shoulders, and pronounced it the end, as it had been the beginning, of his political career. To this latter opinion Mr. Evans himself inclined, upon the occurrence of another instance of what he called Allen's "imprudence,"—a cabalistic word, which serves wonderfully to confound right and wrong. A person of some property and influence applied to them professionally. Mr. Evans happening not to be in the office, he was about opening his business to Allen; but previously adverting to the coming election, commended the course he had taken, expressed great interest in his success, and then turning to his own affairs, opened his case; which was the repelling a claim of debt arising on a contract. He stated it with more amplification than perspicuity; but Allen quickly perceived that his defence was to rest solely on a technical advantage, by which he trusted to screen himself from a just demand.

"Do I understand you, sir," said Allen, as he ceased speaking, "to have possessed me of all the circumstances?"

Mr. — answered in the affirmative.

"Then allow me to put some questions, which,

if not strictly professional, are nevertheless to the matter in hand.

"Did you believe at the time, that this person understood the contract in the terms now stated?"

"Why—yes—I can't say but I did."

"And further—were you not willing he should so understand it?"

"Well—what if I were?"

"Has he failed in any part of his obligation? I mean, in any thing essential, any thing comprehended in the spirit of the contract?"

"Why—no—I can't say that he has."

"Have you fulfilled yours?—I don't speak now to the merely verbal advantages on which you rest—I ask you to answer me plainly and truly, have you fulfilled yours, as both he and yourself understood it at the time of contracting?"

"No; I haven't paid the money, if that's what you mean; and if we can show his claim not good in law, why should I?"

"For the best reason in the world, sir—because you owe it; you have no occasion for our services in this business; no honest man wants a lawyer's advice in regard to the payment of a just debt. I can have nothing to do, sir, in this matter."

Mr. —, having received more than he asked, a moral lesson as well as a legal opinion, left the

office, and with the malignant resentment which mean minds conceive when convicted of conduct of which they are ashamed, without having the virtue to repent, directed his strength against Allen's election.

When Mr. Evans returned, Allen informed him of the circumstance. He looked vexed, took two or three hasty turns across the room, then stopping short and speaking in an excited tone, "Allen," said he, "I like honesty as well as you do, but I don't see the use of for ever spitting against the wind. This man can influence more votes than any other individual in the town—"

"What, sir!" exclaimed Allen, "would you have me traffic for votes? and that too by abetting roguery?"

"No—no more than you yourself; but you might have evaded an opinion—you might have postponed attending to the business at present; how easy, to a man ignorant of legal forms, to suggest delays; any thing but calling him a liar and a rascal to his face—you are not a very ingenious lawyer if you could not 'fight shy' till the election was over."

"My dear sir, if I did not know how to explain this, I should be concerned beyond expression. Nothing but your zeal for my advantage could

blind you to the real character of such conduct ; but we'll talk no more of what I wish to forget. Let us be friends now and for ever—but give me no counsel I ought to resent."

"Well, well, Allen," said Mr. Evans, "I beg your pardon, I believe you are right—I'll do what I can for you—but—" he paused, but his manner was sufficiently expressive.

The decisive moment came ; and Allen saw the success of his opponents announced in large characters, as "The glorious triumph of consistency !"

"So much," said Mr. Evans, "for people's always speaking their own mind—"

"Amen," responded Allen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Now you are not he, for I am he.

Which he, sir ?

He, sir, that must marry this woman."

As you like it.

ALTHOUGH Allen, in moments of calm reflection, believed himself not only to have entirely recovered from the injury inflicted on his feelings by the heartless trifling of Love Heywood, but even so far to have subdued his interest in her as to be able to rejoice in his escape, it may be questioned, perhaps, whether the emotion with which he contemplated what he called the "necessity" of another visit to Westdale, was any indication of so philosophic a frame of mind.

His friend Mr. Evans had been thrown into some uneasiness and perplexity. He had received intelligence of the death of a relation, a merchant in New-Orleans, whose affairs demanded attention. He had left no family ; and his property, after the


settlement of a complicated concern, rendered more difficult to manage by his sudden death, would fall to Mr. Evans. But to give his personal care to the business appeared so formidable an undertaking to one of Mr. Evans's indolent habits, that he would have been almost willing to renounce the advantage to himself, rather than thus put in peril his comfort. To avoid so disagreeable an alternative, he proposed to Allen, on whom he could rely, perhaps even more entirely than on himself, to adjust the matter as his agent. Glad of every opportunity to enlarge his knowledge of men and things, he readily consented, received the necessary instructions, and prepared for his departure.

But could he go without a farewell visit to Westdale? Besides, he could take it on his way to the port whence he was to sail—and on this he decided. He excused to himself his restlessness as the time approached, his impatience of every obstacle that threatened delay, by solicitude for his mother, from whom he had not heard in an unusually long time; and the natural desire to reach Westdale at the season of their annual Thanksgiving—now near at hand. This festival, so rich in associations to every son and daughter of New-England, was appointed on the present

occasion in the latter part of November. The autumn had been uncommonly fine, and even when near its close the air was soft and the roads were still good ; circumstances propitious to those absentees who at such periods return to the paternal roof-tree, to share its festivities and receive a blessing.

Among these none pressed on more eagerly than Allen ; but the evening preceding the day appointed, when within a short distance of Westdale, an accident occurred to his vehicle that compelled him to wait till the morning. As soon as was practicable he was again on his way, but did not reach the village till its inhabitants were assembled in church. Unwilling to wait till the service was over, after seeing, like a "merciful man," to the comfort of his beast, he entered the "meeting-house."

The congregation were engaged in prayer, yet here and there a stray look was attracted by the light and reverential step of Allen, and a ray of pleasure beamed from more than one face. On reaching his mother's pew, he found her with her head inclined, unheeding his entrance. Absorbed in the feelings which that day always recalled—her lost husband and children, her absent son, the time when it was to her a day of preparation and



hospitality, when not alone her own full and crowded board bore witness to her liberality, but "those for whom nothing was provided" blessed the food her thoughtful bounty had bestowed ; and now, the solitary meal to which she must return, with no one to welcome, none to participate,—she heard no sound, not even the voice of praise that ascended from the pulpit.

Ah ! how many have felt at such periods the changes which life brings to all—have from these commanding points of time looked back with tearful and desponding eyes on joys departed, and friends severed from their sides ! Who, that has spread their table year after year, as the blessing rises for those who remain, but has marked with quivering lip the vacant places of those who, one by one, have dropped away !

Allen seated himself softly in a corner of the pew, that he might not disturb his mother ; she, little dreaming that he, for whom her secret prayer was ascending, was within reach of those arms with which she longed to enfold him.

The devotional service ended, Mrs. Prescott raised her head from its sad and humble posture, sighed, wiped from her eyes the tears that had gathered, and lo !—they rested on Allen ; and his arm, with a gentle and affectionate pressure, was

passed around her waist. Before his sunny smile the clouds of the past and the present rolled away ; and though repressing the inquiries that rose to her lip, she bent on him the glance with which a mother endeavours to read, not only the health of her child, but the hidden things of his spirit. All looked well ; for though, as she thought, " Allen is more sober than he used to be, 'tis no more than natural ; he's three years older—and then too he's in meeting."

Meanwhile, if Allen, like his mother, restrained all direct inquiry till decorum permitted it, his eyes were busy in quest of information. The congregation presented the good appearance which, according to custom, marks the observance of the festival. Every one had a fresh and comfortable aspect : the boys clad in a new suit of clothes, designed for their best during the coming season ; little girls with their clean stuff frocks ; the maidens, some with their summer bonnets newly trimmed with the dark and glowing colours befitting the approaching winter, others with hats of a closer fashion and warmer texture ; the matrons, some with a new shawl, others a new gown ; the young men with new coats, and buttons as bright as their happy faces ; and if their fathers wore old ones, they had been so carefully used as to look "amaist

as weel's the new." All, according to their ability, had arrayed themselves well "for thanksgiving," and even the poorest were clean and whole.

In the general survey, however, in which he recognised many familiar and friendly faces, Allen observed that one was missing. In Mr. Heywood's pew sat the assembled family—all but Love; neither was she in her frequent seat in the choir. "Perhaps," thought Allen, "she sits behind, and is hid by those taller girls;" and watching every movement among them, he endeavoured to ascertain if he were right in his conjecture. They rose to sing, and he fancied he could distinguish her voice. Once or twice, a figure in some respects resembling hers, and imperfectly discerned between those who occupied the front seat, quickened his pulse, and heightened his colour; but they reseated themselves, and he found he was mistaken,—it was plain she was not there. Yet, unwilling to trust himself with an inquiry, he tried to account for her absence by supposing her detained at home by the usual hospitable cares of the day.

The sermon was concluded—the "set piece" sung—the blessing pronounced—and all, issuing from their pews, extended an affectionate greeting to relatives and neighbours. Friendly hands

were offered to Allen, as he passed down the aisle, and kind gratulations expressed to his mother; who leaning on his arm, they proceeded together through the vestibule of the church towards the outer door. When within a few steps of it, Allen perceived several persons approach, in order to read a notice which, according to custom, was affixed to it,—then, with smiles and whispers, retreat. With the curiosity common on such occasions, he too, as his mother parted from him to speak to a neighbour, turned to see what had thus amused others,—and read, with what feelings may be imagined, the following:—

“Intentions of marriage are hereby published between the Rev. Henry Dalton and Miss Love Heywood, both of this place.”

If Allen had hitherto deceived himself as to the degree of his interest in Love, he was now incapable of such delusion. A faintness seized him—his limbs scarce sustained him—and catching at his mother's arm, as she resumed her place by him, he sought the support he had a moment before afforded. To her anxious inquiry he gave no answer, till, having descended the steps, and the air in some degree restoring him, he quieted her apprehensions by an evasive reply, and recovered himself so far as to suppress all external

signs of emotion. But having arrived at home, the tumult within could no longer be restrained; and, retreating from observation, he gave vent to a passionate burst of feeling.

Although in one of Mrs. Prescott's letters she had hinted at new rumours about Love, yet, as she—trusting that Allen had renounced his fancy for her—charitably dwelt little on the subject, he had regarded them as unfounded; or, at most, as proceeding from thoughtless trifling,—dismissing them from his mind with the reflection, "What is it to me, whether true or false?"—a question he was at present better able to solve. The engagement, now first formally announced, had been understood so short a time, that it was not surprising that Mrs. Prescott, never a ready writer, nor disposed to gossip, should not have taken extraordinary pains to communicate it.

Allen had reasoned calmly when at a distance, and when no insuperable barrier was likely to be opposed to those wishes still lurking in his heart; but he could not, with equal self-possession, meet the fact that she was actually lost to him for ever, amid scenes which recalled her image in all its original simplicity, kindness, and beauty. Yielding to those associations that now came thronging to overpower him, he lived over again his

early fondness—his long-cherished preference—his matured yet disappointed love—till a gentle tap at his door summoned him to dinner.

As she offered her scanty meal, Mrs. Prescott regretted it was not more worthy of such a day and such a visiter ; but she soon perceived that a royal feast would have been equally tasteless.

“Allen, you are in trouble,” said she, tenderly ; “and will you keep it from me ? If I can neither help nor counsel you, I can feel for you as much now as when you used to cry yourself to sleep on my bosom.”

Allen felt indeed as if he could at the moment have laid his head on her lap, and wept as when a child ; but though resisting the weakness, he did not withhold his confidence ; and in avowing the continuance of his attachment, betrayed what he had hitherto concealed from himself, how little in fact he had renounced the object. It was the course best for his peace, as it led to a fuller exposition of all that was said and thought of Love than Mrs. Prescott would otherwise have been inclined to make.

“And can she, then,” exclaimed he, with an effusion of honest indignation, “can she be this heartless, calculating, artful being you describe !—Be easy, my dear mother ; I cannot suffer long for

such a girl : let us never henceforth even speak of her."

But though Allen now, with an emotion of melancholy satisfaction, acquiesced in the destiny that separated them for ever, he was aware that to see Love at present would be but superfluous suffering. He determined, therefore, to abridge a visit which at the best could have been but short,—a decision his mother did not oppose. His projected voyage too, which at another time would have filled her with dismay, she now even rejoiced in,—accompanied as it was by the assurance that he should probably be on his return before she would think it necessary to write to him. With many injunctions as to his health, and exhortations "to keep up a good heart," she consented that he should leave her the following morning ; and at an early hour he was on his way to New-York, whence he was to embark.

CHAPTER XXV.

"As you enjoin'd me, I have writ your letter,
Unto the secret nameless friend of yours."

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

ALLEN's brief visit excited little remark. He was now a man of business ; his time of course was worth something, and it was rather to his credit that he should have come out of his way to "keep thanksgiving," than matter of surprise that he staid no longer. There was one person, however, who could not regard it quite so rationally. Love Heywood heard that Allen had come, and gone ; come, after such an absence—gone, too, to such a distance—yet without the slightest token of recognition ; and she heard it as the death-blow to their intercourse.

"Yet why should she wish it otherwise ? He, like herself, was pledged to another ; if he were so cold and indifferent as not to desire to preserve her

as a friend, nor even as an acquaintance, it certainly ~~was~~ not for *her* to complain."

With a swelling heart, as she made this reflection, she tied on her bonnet to go and see Lindy Doble, who had been ill for some weeks, and to whom she had so kindly ministered ~~as to subdue~~ her angry prejudices. Taking a basket with comforts of various kinds, and choosing a ~~sequestered~~ path that she might avoid Mr. Dalton, whom she expected, yet at this moment could not endure to meet, she proceeded towards Lindy's hut,—a perfect transcript of the mind of the owner; surrounded by gnarled untrimmed apple-trees, and the yard strewn with the few implements of her coarse agriculture and domestic labours; but having, to her, a charm without which a palace would have disgusted—it was her own. The same mixture of dirt and industry, care and destruction, was visible throughout; plenty of food and fire, rags and recklessness; an accumulation of every description of broken ware, worn-out garments, and useless lumber; every thing scrupulously saved lest it might some time be wanted,—nothing in order for present use: but the unsightly dwelling was not, as formerly, relieved by the careless mirth of the proprietor. She, like most of her race, was easily subdued by the touch of sickness, and lay

in doleful inactivity in an obscure corner, neither amused nor disturbed by the children, puppies, cats, and chickens, tenants in common of the same room.

The sight of Love cheered her for a moment; but in reply to her kind inquiries, she said in a querulous tone that "she wasn't no better, nor never should be;" adding, that "she was glad Love had come, for she had something on her mind that she wished to say to a partic'lar person, and she wished her to write a letter for her."

"With all my heart, Lindy," replied Love; "but don't feel so badly, and look as if you were making your last dying speech,—you'll be, as you say, 'as well as a fish,' in a little while, I know."

Lindy shook her head despondingly.

"You dor't know nothing about it, Love," said she; "I tell you I shall never go out of that door again, only heels forward; and what's to come of 'Siah, and his wife, and the young ones, a'ter I'm gone, is more than I can see into."

"Pho, pho!" said Love, "you'll live long enough to spoil them just as you did 'Siah, and work yourself, day and night, that they may sit in the sun, as they do now, and do nothing. Never fear, Lindy, you haven't yet done more than half the mischief you are to—but where is this letter I am to write?"

and the paper, pen, and ink? and who is the person? I should have come provided if I had supposed that you had such important business for me."

The last inquiry Lindy evaded, but directed her where to find the necessary materials, with which she had had the forethought to furnish herself.

"Well, I am ready," said Love, seating herself on a broken chair by the side of the bed, and making use of her lap as a desk; "what shall I say?"

"My dear friend," dictated Lindy.

"My dear friend," repeated Love, writing; "what next?"

"Have you wrote it so quick?" said Lindy.

"Yes, and I'm ready for more."

But so wasn't Lindy; she turned and twisted, dictated and then recalled several introductory sentences, till at last she asked Love in a desponding tone, "how she should begin?"

"How am I to tell," said Love, "unless I know to whom you are writing? but you must understand your own business,—just tell that."

But this did not suit Lindy, who felt, as many others have done, a reluctance to come at once to the real matter in hand.

"Well, then," said Love, seeing her still h

"tell any thing,—about yourself, your family, your good luck, or—"

"I haven't had none," said Lindy, interrupting her petulantly.

"Well, then, your bad luck," said Love, laughing.

Lindy had now a topic,—and the letter proceeded rapidly, as follows :—

"My dear Friend,

"I am sorry to say I have had the misfortune to lose a fine young heifer that I calculated would fetch me twenty-five dollars come spring, choked with a potato—all owing to 'Siah's feeding them out to her without cutting ; but that ain't all,—I got a hard cold going down into the marsh a'ter cranberries, which first fell into my head, and then reflected into my eyes ; and then I had a settled fever, and my flesh went off like dew ; and then I took a fresh cold, and now I'm stiff as a rail with the rheumatiz, and all I've earned will go for doctor's stuff,—there won't be enough to bury me. I should like to see you before I die, but as I don't expect to, there's one thing I want to say to you—"

"Why, Lindy !" exclaimed Love, "what an **ul case** you have made of it ! You've got the

'hypo,' as you call it, as badly as ever Dimy Tuttle had,—that's the way with you people that laugh at other folks."

But Lindy was in no humour for jokes,—and grumbling out, with something of her former spirit, that "Dimy was a fool," went on, after a pause, with her letter, though evidently with some embarrassment.

"You remember—I 'spose—the billet—you gave me to carry to—a certain person—I had my own reasons for not doing as you told me—I sometimes mistrust now that I did wrong; but it's too late to cry for spilled milk—what I want to say to you is, that it is safe in my hands still, and if I die 'Siah can tell you where to find it. I should have sent this word before, only I looked for you to come home. This from your loving friend,

"MELINDA DOBLE."

"Lindy!" said Love, while a startling, scarce defined suspicion crossed her mind, "to whom is this letter written?"

"That I sha'n't tell to nobody," said Lindy firmly; adding, what indeed could not be disputed "it isn't nobody's business but them that's concerned."

"But you must," said Love, earnestly; "how is it to be sent without being directed?"

Lindy had, however, provided for that difficulty. The fact was, that this matter had lain much on her mind since her gratitude and good-will had been called forth by Love's attentions. She began to fear she had wronged both her and Allen by suppressing the communication intrusted to her, and which she had always designed to restore, had he returned. Of his recent short visit she was ignorant; and unwilling longer to delay the only reparation in her power, she had resolved on the mode just adopted; for she rightly judged that if it were, what she never doubted, "a love-billet," it was "all nonsense" to give it to Love herself under her present circumstances. To those wiser than Lindy, she might for the same reason have seemed the last person to be employed on such an occasion; but Lindy thought differently. She relied much on her own skill to conceal the parties; but if, after all, she failed, "'twas," as she argued, "their own secret, and Love had a better right to know it than any one else;" and among other precautions to prevent disclosure, she intended that when written and sealed 'Siah should take it to Mrs. Prescott for direction.

Again Love pressed her with inquiries, but to

no purpose. All she could obtain was, that "she knew well enough what she was about, and shouldn't open her head to nobody."

Love was repeatedly tempted to put a home question, and to ask at once if she herself had any interest in the matter, but prudence and propriety restrained her; and with a mind perplexed and anxious she returned home. The next day, while still revolving her distressing doubts, 'Siah came to beg her assistance for his mother, who was much worse.

On reaching the house, she found her in violent pain, attended with slight delirium. The usual external applications were tried in vain, and Love inquired for laudanum. 'Siah, a shiftless dawdling fellow, in clothes the sport of every breeze, and resembling his mother only in her faults and kindness of temper, was a poor coadjutor. With much concern, but no success, he sought in all probable and improbable places, and at length went to a neighbour's to beg some. In the mean time his wife suggested that Lindy might have put it in her chest, "she was so 'fraid on't."

On this hint Love renewed the search among the motley collection of things which constituted Lindy's valuables, and at length found the "till," under calico patches and dirty r

in removing these, she perceived that she had taken up something folded in brown paper that felt like a letter. It instantly occurred to her that she was in possession of the mysterious "billet" to which Lindy attached such importance—which she herself, she hardly knew why, so longed to see,—and that Lindy was unable to observe or prevent the gratification of her curiosity. The sophistry, too, occurred to her, that it was, perhaps, even her duty to resolve doubts so harassing. Too honourable, however, to invade on such a pretext the secret of another, she threw it down, but with a violence proportionate to the effort necessary to overcome the temptation ; and in so doing there fell from the loosely folded envelope a letter which, in confirmation of her suspicions, she perceived to be addressed to herself, in the handwriting of Allen Prescott ! No question of morals could then arise ; and if there could, Love had neither the skill nor will for such casuistry. Taking up again the letter, which she now considered as her own, she put it in her work-bag, and proceeded to administer the laudatum to Lindy.

The paroxysm of pain subsided, and with it the nervous excitement and wandering ; and her patient having, as she supposed, fallen asleep, Love

withdrew to a little window, nearly impervious by reason of the old hats and bundles of rags which replaced sundry broken panes ; and, by light obscured by dirt and cobwebs, read the note so long since addressed to her, the intention of which had been so perversely frustrated. Though short, it was full of feeling ; not the less touching that the writer evidently, though vainly, struggled against it ; betraying, even while he meant to conceal it, how tenderly she was loved. There were also half-uttered reproofs, but in the gentlest terms, and obscure hints at something that endangered her respectability and happiness ; and though the interview was asked for a " friend," it was urged like a lover.

With eyes bent on it, intently reading and re-reading every word, the thoughts of Love reverted to all that had passed before and since these lines were traced. Allen's faithful attachment, her own folly ; his disappointment, and necessary misconstruction of her disregard of his request ; her present engagement, which she now felt like the fetters of a slave ; the entire renunciation of her by Allen ; his intended marriage with another—all the result of her own frivolity. These and similar corroding reflections rushing through her mind, crowded it with images of wo and sh-

till, unable to control herself, she leaned her head on her hand and sobbed aloud in the agony of her spirit. She wept with violence, unconscious and careless of observation, till recalled by an exclamation from Lindy, who had raised herself from her pillow and was contemplating her with astonishment—

“For the land’s sake ! Love, what are you taking on so for ?” said she.

“Oh, Lindy ! Lindy !” exclaimed Love, “how could you—” when, restrained by a sense of propriety, she suppressed the reproach, with the reflection that it was cruel to inform Lindy of the extent of the injury she had inflicted, and both dangerous and indelicate to put herself in her power by betraying feelings now nearly criminal. Wiping her eyes, and assuming a composure far enough from the fact, she evaded the inquiry, talked of Lindy’s health, prescribed for her further relief, and having at length acquired the requisite calmness, informed her of the discovery she had made, and endeavoured to ascertain her motives for assuming such a responsibility.

Lindy, as she often said, was “no fool ;” and discreetly as Love tried to veil the nature of the letter, and her real interest in it, and temperately

as she chid her interference, she saw but too plainly that she "had only made trouble." Humbled and distressed at this, she blamed herself, to use her own homely figure, for "putting her finger in other folks' pie," as much as any one could have done; with reiterated assurances—always little consolatory to the sufferer—"that she had done it all for the best; but that if she had ~~known~~ as much then as now, she would have gone on hands and knees to carry it, rather than it should have failed."


Unwilling to trust herself further, Love merely demanded the letter dictated to Allen the previous day, which, in spite of expostulation, she instantly destroyed; enjoining on Lindy silence, now and for ever.

"Better," thought she, "that he should remain ignorant that I was even so far innocent, than experience any part of what I now feel!"

Retracing her steps homeward, with feelings an enemy might have pitied, Love heard on entering the house the voice of Mr. Dalton, and sickening at the sound retreated unobserved to her own room; and alleging what was indeed true, that she was too much indisposed to be seen, she gave her thoughts to the consideration of the embarrassing situation in which she found herself. She

could not now, as formerly, parry the charge of caprice and unfeeling trifling by dividing it with Allen. He had been consistent; he had sought her, it was plain, with one single worthy purpose—as the object of a long unchanging love. Even when disgusted with her conduct, he had perseveringly endeavoured to do her good; and if he had finally renounced her, had not her behaviour justified him? Oh, how beautiful now appeared truth and simplicity! how cordially she detested the course she had been incited to pursue!

One thing yet remained to be done; and, with the promptitude with which a mind naturally sincere returns to the direct course, after a deviation foreign to its real temper, she determined on it. She would seek no counsel from her mother, because she felt she was not to be trusted,—that she would only obscure what seemed clear as the day while she listened to the dictates of her own honesty; she would not expose herself to arguments which might distress and perplex, but could not satisfy her. Had Miss Callender been at home, she would perhaps have had recourse to her advice; but she was to be absent for some months, and Love was reduced by necessity to her true and safest course. Of Allen she thought only as of one who could never be any thing to her.—



Her entire estrangement from Mrs. Prescott prevented her ever receiving any direct intelligence, though the general belief left no doubt of his engagement. But however hopeless the sentiment she felt for him, it was one essentially at variance with her duty as the wife of another. "I will at least be true to Mr. Dalton!" exclaimed she; "if I cannot love, I will neither deceive ~~nor~~ marry him. I will endure any mortification rather than do that which would make me odious to myself, however I might by it gain respect or consequence in the eyes of others."

With a mind quieted by a virtuous resolution, she at length sunk to sleep; but it was disturbed by images of perplexity and suffering, and she arose unrefreshed, trembling at the task before her, yet resolved to perform it.

She had not long to endure the anticipation of a disagreeable duty. In the course of the morning Mr. Dalton called, with a kind inquiry after her health; but, struck with her altered appearance and averted face, asked in alarm if any thing had occurred to distress her. The natural and only answer was the disclosure she had meditated; not of her feelings for Allen,—these she considered it her melancholy right to keep to herself.—She frankly, however, accused herself of the vain

and unworthy motives which had so much influenced her ; generously inculpating herself, that she might thereby diminish the suffering to her lover.

Mr. Dalton, a kind-hearted man, with much simplicity, but whose good sense had never been questioned save in the matter of Love, listened with varying feelings to her ingenuous self-criminating recital ; by turns grieved, indignant, and admiring. The lover still prevailing, he replied by a tender expostulation against this disappointment of his hopes, and with an earnest entreaty to be yet allowed time, that he might even now win affections he had already deemed his own. But she was not again to be entrapped in the toils from which she had thus violently broken.—Knowing too well the secrets of that heart he wished to gain, she was resolved by no faint denials from weakness or compassion to be betrayed into indecision and subsequent suffering and rebuke. To all his representations, delicately urging considerations for her, as well as for himself, she replied with feeling, but firmly,—

“ You will soon forget so silly and unworthy a girl as I must on reflection appear to you ; and as it regards the consequences to myself, however mortifying, I deserve them all. Let me be called jilt, flirt, capricious, unfeeling,—any thing ; I can



bear it all as my proper punishment : no blame can fall on you."

But Mr. Dalton, touched by the confiding, self-reproachful tone of Love's communication, felt more like a Christian than, we fear, most men do under similar circumstances. He saw in the blushing and distressed girl before him an erring and repentant fellow-creature ; and, suppressing his sense of personal injury, he replied kindly, though with much emotion,—


" When I chose you, Love, to be the wife of my bosom, whatever of human infirmity may have mingled with my affection, I was not so far left as to think you faultless ; and however great the pain your disclosure gives me, the feeling I still entertain for you will not allow me to find consolation in hearing you reproached. If I may not shelter your imperfections with the mantle of a husband's love, I will at least do all I can to screen them as your pastor and your friend. Let us part then (if that be inevitable) as those who, having agreed to bear each other company on a journey, find it notwithstanding expedient to separate at the first stage, with cordial good wishes, and friendly anticipations of a final reunion after the roughness of our several paths be over-passed,—when we shall rather rejoice to meet in peace than

be grieved beyond measure that we were parted by the way."

Mr. Dalton paused. He had endeavoured, with some success, to merge the feelings of the man in those which belonged to a different relation; but this final, solemn renunciation of his hopes overcame him; and Love, softened and humbled, her laughing eye swimming in tears—her ruby lip quivering—her woman's arts and airs all gone—felt less like a mistress weighing the destiny of a lover than like a penitent before her spiritual father. How would Charles Davenport have laughed at the transformation! How would Allen Prescott have pitied the retribution!

"I am constrained," resumed Mr. Dalton, "by my character, and the feelings of my people, to maintain my own consistency and uprightness; but I do not see that I am therefore obliged to condemn or to expose you. For the first, it is enough to say that we have relinquished our purpose of marriage; and when it is seen that our intercourse is equally friendly, though curious persons may wonder, you will be safe from evil tongues."

So much was Love touched by this humane considerateness, that, had her affection been at her own disposal, she would have retracted in-



stantly the rejection just pronounced; as it was, she could only with eloquent looks convey her sense of it.

To satisfy her mother was now her hardest task; yet, sustained by a consciousness of right, she resolutely prepared for it. To all Mrs. Heywood's inquiries she returned the same answer,—
“that they had deemed it best for both parties that the matter should go no further:” a fuller explanation she deemed inexpedient; for, if she could have trusted to the prudence of her mother, she could not enter into an exposition of her own folly and vanity without reflections on Mrs. Heywood herself, as having involved her in these perplexities; and from this she resolved respectfully to forbear. But her mother could not practise a similar restraint. “And what will people say!” was the first and natural exclamation of the vexed and mortified Mrs. Heywood.

“My dear mother,” replied Love, in a deprecating tone, “when persons know that they are doing their duty, they care much less what people say than when they want to be supported in what is wrong.”

“Duty!—fiddlestick!” said Mrs. Heywood, with ineffable contempt, and roused quite out of her propriety; “the duty of a girl is to get a husband.”

who can maintain her, and give her some consequence in the world; which, with all the good advantages and privileges which you have had, you'll never do—I see that! At this rate of carrying-on you'll go through the wood, and through the wood, and take up with a crooked stick at last!"

At this moment Mr. Heywood entered; and perceiving from the elevated and angry voice of his wife, and the flushed and troubled face of Love, that there was something wrong, demanded the cause of uneasiness.

"Ask Love," said his wife, with a resentful glance at her.

Love, dreading, yet thankful to be allowed, to tell her own story, gave the required explanation; when, to her great relief, her father replied, "I'm glad on't, glad on't, with all my heart! It wasn't consistent, nor suitable; and I'm glad on't."

"Glad!" repeated the provoked Mrs. Heywood, "glad that your daughter has made herself the talk of everybody—that she has lost a good husband—and has got such a name that in all likelihood she'll never have another chance! Well, I must say some folks are thankful for small mercies."

"Betsey," replied Mr. Heywood, "I won't say

but I'm sorry that Love carried this matter so far ; girls hadn't ought to do any thing imprudent ; but certain it isn't so foolish to look over a precipice as to jump down. And then, where's the use of making what's bad already worse by reflecting on her for it ? That's too much the way with women-folks,—when a thing's done, and can't be helped, they can't never rest without flinging at it. She'll never do the like again, I'll warrant."

"No, indeed, I guess not," said Mrs. Heywood, proceeding to justify her husband's observation, "she'll never have another opportunity."

"Maybe so—maybe not," said he, calmly ; "but as to getting a husband, better get none than one that don't suit her. So don't feel so badly, Love," said he, putting his hand on her head ; "those that brought you into the scrape hadn't ought to twit you with getting out of it."

The displeasure of Mrs. Heywood was now divided between her daughter and her husband ; and Love, availing herself of the angry self-defence of her mother directed to her father, retreated.

The generous precautions of Mr. Dalton had, in a good degree, the effect he intended. The first consequence of the dissolution of the engagement was, to be sure, an outcry against poor Love ;

but on seeing that there was no interruption of harmony between the parties, conjecture was at a stand ; and people were reduced to shrug their shoulders and declare it "queer,"—an expressive monosyllable whose vagueness constitutes its power, inasmuch as all are at liberty to affix their own signification. But human beings are inconsistent, and queer things happen so frequently that they are soon forgotten.

During the first explosion, which of course shook Westdale to its centre, one person had stood up nearly single-handed for Love—Mary Norris—who declared frankly and fearlessly, "that as long as she might draw her own conclusions, and have her own opinion, they should be in favour of Love Heywood ; who, whatever people should say of her, was a kind, true-hearted girl, and never did wrong when she was let alone. That as to Mr. Dalton, he might be very good, and to be sure she was bound to think him so ; but she should not condemn one she had known so long, and thought so well of, for any new acquaintance, be he who he might."

Love, to whom this was reported, listened with mingled shame and gratitude. Yielding to the impulse thus given (she seldom erred when obeying the suggestions of her own nature), she

exclaimed, "She shall know it all, though I may lose her regard by it; she ought to understand and respect Mr. Dalton as he deserves. After all the pain I have given him, it will be some consolation to know that I have procured him such a friend."

Her heart throbbing with this purpose, and impatient to execute it, she instantly repaired to Mrs. Norris. Mary, who had seen her approach, met her at the door with a cordial smile. Her healthful but delicate face, shaded by her light brown hair, was the image of kindness and tranquillity; and her manner, staid, but cheerful, was no less a contrast to the flurried and anxious countenance and uncertain step of Love, who, as she entered the house, almost repented her intention. But on finding herself alone with Mary, who with gentle violence took away her hat and shawl, expressed her pleasure at seeing her, and regrets that they had lately so seldom met, Love's usual sensibility to kindness was touched, her courage revived, and she exclaimed, "Oh, Mary! how I wish I had been more with you! what a friend I might have had! You are always good—you never did wrong in your life—while I!—Oh! how foolish I have been!"


The ice was now broken, and Love's troubled

spirit poured itself forth, withholding only her sentiments for Allen ; saying, as she concluded, " Now you know all, I can no longer expect to retain your friendship ; but I have done what I trust will console me."

" My dear Love," said Mary, in soothing accents, " you can never lose it. As to the bad feelings towards me of which you accuse yourself, I know you exaggerate them ; and if not, I shall never think of them again. In regard to Mr. Dalton, you were wrong, to be sure. You see, Love, I am your true friend, for I deal frankly ; but who does not do wrong sometimes ? Besides, Love, you have had many temptations to which the rest of us have not been exposed ; I," she continued, with much simplicity, " *I* never had an admirer in my life, Love."

" Oh !" cried our self-accusing little heroine, giving utterance to a sentiment sincere at the moment, but one to which she might have found it difficult to adhere—" Oh, that I too had never had one !"

The result was what Love had not dared to hope,—not only justice to Mr. Dalton, but for herself the affections of a girl whose gentle nature and upright mind were just what she required to console and confirm her. In this intercourse Love was naturally led,—as she remarked the quiet brow



of Mary, the placid flow of her feelings, unruffled by a single uneasy retrospect or apprehension,—to reflect on the feverish and unsatisfactory state in which she had herself so long been tossed about : the alternation of hope and fear, of plot and counterplot, of excitement and depression,—all ending in disappointment and humiliation. Then, how would she sigh to recall the time when vanity had not tempted, nor flattery delighted her. One thing alone she could reflect on with pleasure,—her affection for Allen. But this must now be subjected to a new analysis, and reduced to a simpler element : and this she virtuously attempted ; trying to rejoice, that as Mrs. Prescott was one whose condemnation of her conduct had been most decided, it was not likely that her acquaintance even with his mother would ever be renewed.

That Mrs. Prescott should be at no pains to rectify the mistake in regard to Allen is not to be wondered at. “No harm,” as she reflected, “could come of people’s saying so—to be sure she shouldn’t say ‘yes’ nor ‘no’—it would at any rate keep all scheming out of Love Heywood’s head”—a point on which she was particularly fearful and suspicious. Nor was she sorry to be unable at present to communicate with her son, because thereby saved the necessity of telling him that she was

again at liberty—a circumstance which, though it tended to confirm her own disapprobation, might, she was well aware, affect him differently ; and feeling pretty sure, that if he were kept in ignorance of that fact for a short time, Love would be involved in some new entanglement, and thus prevented laying snares for him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Do not call it sin in me,
That I am forsworn for thee."

Love's Labour's Lost.


ON arriving at New-Orleans, Allen found the business on which he had been sent so involved with the affairs of others, that delay and disappointment continually frustrated his expectations of success and return. It is not our intention to follow him through these. It is sufficient for our purpose to say, that after a vexatious and tedious process, in which he was led from place to place, and detained till late in the following spring, he had the pleasure of securing the rights of Mr. Evans, and of turning his face homeward. Having landed at New-York, he was induced to decide unexpectedly on taking Westdale in his way to C—, and commenced his journey, animated at the anticipation of the pleasant surprise to his

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mother, who had not yet been apprized of his return.

It was the middle of a May, so beautiful, notwithstanding our usual unfortunate experience in this particular, as to deserve her place in the Poet's Kalendar, when having approached within two miles of the village just as the sun was, in rural speech, "half an hour high," the fancy seized him to alight from the stage-coach, which took a circuitous route, and to gain his mother's door by a "cross-cut," instead of running the gauntlet of the village-hotel and post-office delays, which now would be intolerable. Having directed where his baggage should be left, he jumped out; and with a joy that, for the present, mastered other recollections, felt his foot press his own green sward, rendered doubly dear by the distance at which he had left it for the last six months.

The tranquillity, the beauty, the balmy air, the soft light that fell so sweetly on every object, the rural sounds and occupations, struck on those mysterious chords by which our nature, like a stringed instrument, responds to the slightest touch, and a thousand feelings of pleasure and pain "twin'd wi' earliest thochts," came thronging to his heart. The elm walk, before referred to, lay in his way. As he entered it he reverted to the



time when with hope and disappointment he had so idly paced it. "But that's all over now!" thought he, with a motion of his hand expressive of a sense of emancipation from a fruitless and ill-placed passion, yet not without a pang at the conviction that the intensity of a first love could never again be felt. As this reflection passed his mind, he caught a glimpse of a female figure preceding him. The foliage was yet imperfectly developed, but here and there the boughs swept so low over the path as partially to obstruct his view, and occasionally, by the windings of the walk, he lost her altogether. As he continued to gain on her, he perceived that she was accompanied by a little boy, who frolicked about, now on one side of the road, now on the other, regardless of her attempts to detain him by her side. In the contest thus induced, her figure and movements startled him by a resemblance to one, whom he could not, though he would, forget; and dreading lest his suspicion might be made certainty, he turned hastily round to avoid an interview which at this moment he felt particularly unfitted for. Vexed, however, at his weakness, and repeating to himself, "I must come to it at last," he proceeded,—at each step more confirmed, till on hearing approaching footsteps she turned her head, and re-

vealed, not, as he believed, Mrs. Dalton, but Love Heywood.

Struck as if by the sight of a visiter from another world, she remained immoveable till he approached; while he, fortified by some moments of preparation, met her with tolerable composure; but the appellation by which he supposed he ought to address her, like Macbeth's "amen," "stuck in his throat." Equally constrained, though from different causes, their extended hands met coldly in exchanging a few not very connected words; and, after an embarrassing silence, he made, with much formality, the common inquiry about her health and friends.

The coldness of his manner restored Love to her self command—who, not divining the mistake under which he laboured, referred it to estrangement—and resolving not to betray her own emotion "if she died for it," she endeavoured by talking to subdue it.

"I am glad I can tell you that your mother is quite well."

Allen expressed his satisfaction.

"And all your other friends too," continued she, anticipating in mere desperation inquiries it would have been more natural to have awaited.

Allen again declared he was happy to hear it,—

and again they were silent ; but Love felt the necessity of another effort.

"You have been quite a traveller since I saw you, Mr.—Mr. Prescott," said she, with a tremulous hesitation ; "but"—she stopped,—the disjunctive conjunction was only too significant of the obstructions that beset her ; then taking courage she dashed on hastily,—"but you have not, I fancy, seen any place prettier than our valley ?"

Allen replied by a single cold negative ; and Love, piqued by his manner, went on more glibly. "Though, I dare say, a great many richer places, and many greater people."

"I have seen," said Allen, still avoiding her supposed name, after considerable effort, and with the emphasis of a moral philosopher, but which, alas ! had its origin in the interests of the humble individual, "I have seen more wealth, and more poverty—more show of happiness, and more real misery—higher virtue, because more difficult—vice more debasing, but perhaps more excusable."

This sententious strain, so unusual with Allen, and which he had from constraint unconsciously adopted, again appalled Love.

"He never talked so to me before," thought she.

"It seems," continued Allen, "as if one must be

good here by a sort of necessity; while in other places it is equally hard to avoid doing wrong."

"Oh dear!" thought Love, "would that *I* had always found it so!"

"But this sweet, tranquil spot," said Allen, still talking in generalities from the dread of becoming personal, "is not best for all persons: a struggle with a hard world is necessary for most of us; and we ought not to complain if we can occasionally revive our spirits with such scenes as these. But then you happy ones, who live here free from care, strife, and temptation, must not reproach us who have ventured forth if we show now and then a soil of the world."

"'Happy ones,' indeed!" thought Love; "much he knows about it!"—then repeating aloud, "'free from care and temptation!' I am sure our mountains are not high enough to shut out either,—human nature is the same everywhere."

These concluding words, too trite, one would think, to excite a sensation, sounded to Allen, under his present misapprehension, so professional that he heard them with displeasure.

"She'll give me next," thought he, "the substance of her husband's last discourse!"

"Our inclinations," continued Love, little aware

that she was confirming his mistake, "may, I suppose, be as evil in themselves here as elsewhere; though they may have fewer occasions to manifest it."

"There—as I expected!" thought Allen; whose irritated feelings gave significance to the most casual expression. "She has profited admirably by her opportunities; and can, I dare say, maintain a disputation as well as her husband! I shall not, however, tax her ingenuity."

"Really," replied he, with a caustic smile, "I had not the slightest inclination to provoke an argument,—on a point, too, which has perhaps particularly engaged your attention; and where you must be so much more at home than myself that if we did differ you must have the advantage."

This reply, to the sensitive conscience of Love, admitted but one interpretation. It pointed, as she naturally supposed, to her experience in her own person of human infirmity; and, hurt and offended at what she thought the coarse irony of Allen, she could scarce restrain her tears. Afraid to speak, she took refuge in silence; which he did not attempt to break till, meeting a slight obstruction in their path, he offered his hand. She refused the proffered assistance; and, to cover her

confusion, looked about for her little companion, who had for some moments been forgotten.

"Where can he be?" said she.

"Who?" inquired Allen, who, from the time they had met, had scarcely observed him.

"The little fellow who was with me—Edward Dalton."

"Her step-son, no doubt," thought Allen; "a pleasant trio we are, truly!" and he offered to go in quest of him if she would direct him.

But this she could not do. Thinking he had run along before them, she quickened her pace; and, for want of other matter, talked of the qualities and fine capacities of the child.

"An agreeable topic!" again thought Allen; "she'll tell me next that he is the counterpart of his father! I shall never be able to stand this much longer."

While thus supporting with difficulty a conversation mutually embarrassing, they saw, peeping through the underwood on one side of the road, the smiling face of the child; who, having hid himself to enjoy inquiry after him, and finding the search had ceased, endeavoured to provoke it anew.

"Love Heywood!" cried he, "Love Heywood! —I see you, but you can't see me!"

"Love *Heywood* !" repeated Allen, starting, and gazing at her with such undisguised emotion that she, surprised into her natural manner and her accustomed smile, exclaimed, "Why, who in the world did you take me for?"

"For whom could I take you," said Allen, regarding her earnestly, and speaking with emphasis, "for whom could I take you, but—Mrs. Dalton?"

Again the cloud came over the brightening face of Love. That Allen should not have heard of the breach of her engagement she had not dreamed, rather supposing that it had of course been communicated with every aggravation; "and how was *she* to tell him!"

Deeply colouring, she walked on; and Allen continued to express his surprise with a voice so altered and interested, that Love took courage, and stammered out something about having "changed her mind."

That a lover should be really grieved at such a fact will, perhaps, hardly be credited. But in Allen, passion could never still the voice of principle; and as he caught these last words, his former conviction of her levity and caprice was so painfully corroborated, that, resisting the returning tide of joy and affection, he relapsed into silence,

and resumed his former cold and constrained manner.

This was too much for Love. The embarrassment of her situation became intolerable. She felt like a criminal before her judge, with the singular aggravation that he was himself the cause of her offence ; and that while less culpable than she appeared, she might not declare it. "Allen, the only one she had really loved, for whose sake she had been capricious, trifling, and apparently false, for whom alone she had inflicted pain and incurred odium,—Allen, after all, despised her, and she must submit in silence ; but her punishment was just,—her folly had brought its own correction. If she were only alone ! where she might wring her hands and weep at liberty !"

They were now emerging from the shaded walk, and came out on the little bridge which terminated it. The same soft light, the same still hour, the same familiar objects, recalled the period when he had hoped on this very spot for confidence, if not affection. Association brought back the same feelings ; the interval was obliterated, and Love seemed at his side by his own request, waiting to receive the admonition which if proper then seemed no less necessary now.

"Why should I not deal frankly with her?"



thought he ; " I know her to be naturally ingenuous—she will receive advice well if kindly given—she is perhaps even now in danger and perplexity, and may have no proper adviser. I will speak to her as a brother should caution a thoughtless sister."

Actuated by this impulse, Allen arrested Love's progress by an inquiry respecting some object that was new to him ; and both leaning on the side of the bridge, he drew her into a few moments conversation on different subjects to relieve their mutual embarrassment. Then cautiously reverting to their early familiarity with the scene around them, and the slight but inevitable changes that had taken place, he made a natural transition to their youthful friendship, and the apparent, though he hoped unnecessary, interruption of it.

Thus far Allen had been able to sustain his fraternal relation ; but his self-command forsook him as he touched the spring of his hitherto restrained affection. Involuntarily, irresistibly it gushed forth, not in the cautious terms he had intended, but in such as little disguised its true character ; giving utterance to the same feelings—though we dare not assert with the same beauty—that a modern poet has so eloquently sung—


"My head runs round and round about,
My heart flows like a sea,
As ane by ane the thochts come back
O' schule-time and o' thee.

Oh, mornin' life, oh, mornin, luve !
Oh, lightsome days and lang !
When hinnied hopes around our hearts
Like simmer blossoms sprang !"

He dwelt on his early fondness—her cherished image when absent—the joy of his return—her kindness—her altered conduct—his mortification—his slighted letter.

"Letter !"—could Love be expected to be longer silent? It was not in nature. Or could Allen hear this first misconstruction removed without further questions and a closer investigation? A full explanation followed. His engagement was a mistake: she had been silly, vain, and piqued, but never inconstant. She had rashly contracted obligations from which she had honourably emancipated herself, and both were free. If there was much to condemn, there was something to pity,—and a heart still all his own. Can it be supposed that Allen delayed or hesitated to claim it?

Time passed unheeded. The light of day had declined; and the young moon had suspended her crescent—a fit emblem of their new-born and expanding hopes—when they parted at that which



had been to them a "bridge of sighs;" but which, though they had crossed it in doubt and trepidation, had, like the fabled passage to Mahomet's heaven, led them to security and joy. Love, attended by her little companion, pursued her route homeward with steps that scarce touched the ground; and Allen turned towards his mother's, to communicate the new light which had risen to bless him.

Without tapping at the outer door, he softly entered the "sitting-room," where at this hour she was to be found. It was, in the phrase of frugal housewives, "too early for candles;" and seated by a small fire, which, as the evening air was still chilly, she had just kindled, she was probably ruminating upon Allen,—thinking that by this time he must be at C——, and that the next mail would bring her a letter to that effect—when the word "mother," in a voice never to be mistaken, was pronounced by her side, and the cheerful blaze fell on the happy face and extended hand of Allen.

Mrs. Prescott was not a woman disposed to unkind prejudices: good-hearted, and having a reasonable temper, she was naturally inclined to merciful judgments. She had condemned Love only on what had appeared sufficient evidence, and was

willing to hear any palliation of which her conduct admitted. Nor is it to be wondered at if she saw with more favour than they deserved actions the motive to which was love for Allen. In truth she was easily propitiated.

The necessary communications to Mr. and Mrs. Heywood were received much as might be expected,—by the former with full, frank, and downright satisfaction—by his wife with a certain qualified approbation, the result of her previous disappointments and the internal reflection “that, after all, it was a good calculation for Love. Allen was a smart young man; and though it wasn’t in point of a match to be compared to Mr. Davenport, nor even to Mr. Dalton, yet he might in time be forehanded,—though she didn’t see clearly into it, how he was going to maintain two families.”

Friends and acquaintances generally were satisfied. Some “had always predicted it from when they were children together;” these, of course, exulted in the confirmation of their own sagacity. Others approved, “because now there was a chance that Love Heywood would settle down, and be good for something;” and others, who had always loved and pitied her, rejoiced that a creature with some faults indeed, but full of all generous impulses, should be given to such wise and

gentle guidance. Miss Patty Pearson, to be sure, did venture to hint "that Allen might have asked in vain some three years back;" but, on the whole, it was admitted to be "about what was right."

There were two individuals who regarded the matter with a more personal interest. It furnished an explanation, if not a justification, of Love's conduct; which Mr. Dalton, though he had ceased to be afflicted by it, was nevertheless sufficiently mortal to be willing to impute to any thing less mortifying than disgust of himself; and to Mary Norris it was a solution of the only puzzle about Love—"the unaccountableness of her not liking Mr Dalton." This, within the last two months, had seemed to her particularly surprising; during which time a more frequent intercourse had led Mr. Dalton to the conviction that he had been entirely mistaken in his late selection, and that Mary Norris, had he the world instead of Westdale to choose from, was certainly the proper wife for him. So eloquently, too, had he enlarged on this subject to Mary herself, that he had converted her to his own belief; and it was pretty well understood that the proper "improvement" of such discourse would follow; and that in good season Mr.

Dalton would elevate Mary to a station second to none in Westdale.

Such an event Love had foreseen, and had done all she dared do to forward it; for, like a "burnt child," she shrunk, whether as principal or second, from all further scheming on the subject of matrimony. It was, indeed, no small item in the sum of her present felicity, and the more valued, perhaps, that she felt it to be undeserved, that it was obtained without suffering to any one. Mr. Dalton's prospect of happiness and usefulness she saw to be far better than if he had married herself; and her excellent friend Mary would worthily fill a place which she might perhaps have disgraced, or the duties of which, at the best, she would have imperfectly sustained.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Bring flowers, bring flowers for the bride to wear,
They were born to blush in her shining hair.
She is leaving the home of her childhood's mirth,
She has bid farewell to her father's hearth,
Her place is now by another's side,—
Bring flowers, fresh flowers for the fair young bride."

Mrs. HERMANS.

THE general pacification recorded in the last chapter having taken place, the subsequent events might be safely left to the imagination of the reader, but a female love of particulars urges our pen to the grand finale,—the wedding celebration. This was nevertheless deferred a full year, during which time the situation of Allen was sufficiently improved to justify so important a step. His professional ability, and the necessary consequence—his admittance to a larger share of the profits of the office—quieted all prudential apprehensions; and having purchased a neat little establishment—such as are to be seen in the flourishing your

towns "at the west," a white house with pretty green blinds, good out-houses, and an "excellent garden-spot,"—having seen it all in order within and without, he set off to bring home the little mistress who was to govern and beautify it.

Love in the mean while had not been idle. Mrs. Heywood, really a kind mother, and a notable housewife, was determined to give her a good out-fit; and accordingly all the preparations proper to their condition and the prospects of their daughter were made. Mr. Heywood, who had wisely forbore all outward demonstrations of triumph, nevertheless chuckled in secret over his greater sagacity, and relieved his exuberant pleasure by generosity to Love, to whom nothing was denied that he could afford. Miss Callender, too, was liberal in presents to her young favourite, expressing in the most flattering terms her interest in both herself and Allen.

Love and her mother were contemplating with true feminine satisfaction these bridal gifts, as Mr. Heywood entered. It was too tempting an opportunity to resist, and winking at his wife, "Betsey," said he, "it was indeed, as you remember once saying, 'a kind providence that opened Miss Callender's door to Love.'"

Mrs. Heywood knew well the occasion on which


she had given vent to this sentiment, and though provoked to have it recalled against her just now, was too proud and pleased at this moment to be much offended at any thing.

"Ah, Mr. Heywood, you will always have your say, you know," replied she, clearing her brow ; "but if Love is happy, I'm content."

"That's right, wife," replied her husband, and in reward of her self-control refrained from pressing his advantage ; "if our children are good and happy that is the main chance:" while Love, not understanding her father's joke, smiled gratefully on both her parents, and zealously resumed her work.

The latter end of June, the sweet month of flowers, came, and true to the appointed day came Allen. And now, perhaps, some nervous fair one exclaims, "How in the world could Love manage about the ceremony?—Mr. Dalton to perform it,—how embarrassing! another publishment, too,—how awkward!" The last difficulty was in fact the only one ; for Mr. Dalton, now some months united to Mary Norris, and perfectly satisfied with his lot, could with entire composure have performed the duty of pastor on the occasion ; but the publishment! that Love felt to be awkward enough. But New-England girls know how to


evade such formalities ;—a trip into “York State” was a well known expedient that would serve in this case as well as another ; and consequently the following was the order of proceedings. Love and Allen, attended by their relatives and friends, among the latter Miss Callender, who took Mrs. Prescott in her own new barouche wagon, on one of the most beautiful mornings in June, set off as gay and happy a party of “weddingers” as ever crossed the border. A clergyman of the first parish in the adjoining state performed the ceremony ; and then returning to Mr. Heywood’s, they were met by the rest of their acquaintances, and the bridal fete was held with the cheerfulness due to the occasion. Nor was there wanting fitting beauty and decoration. The bride, and those who, in rural phrase, “stood up with her,” in other words her bridesmaids, arrayed in white, and ornamented with natural flowers, looked the very spirits of the season. Amid Love’s rich dark hair reposed a “rose unique,” sent for that purpose by Miss Callender, accompanied by a note which left no doubt of the compliment intended ; and in her girdle a bouquet of myrtle, lilies, and mignonette : while her pretty nymphs, less restricted in their choice, exhibited in tasteful combination the more glowing flowers, and every various tinted rose, from the



deep otaheitan to the queenly damask. The lights, an important adjunct on such occasions, and therefore taken by Miss Callender under her especial care, were managed with much skill. Branches of the simplest materials were attached to the walls, wreathed with flowers, and so arranged as to have a better and more appropriate effect than the most costly candelabras; and the early honey-suckle, trained over the trellised door, sent its perfume through the windows as a grateful incense to the bride. In proper time Love's little brothers and sisters, neatly arrayed, entered, headed by Lindy Doble, each bearing salvers loaded with the customary offerings. This was a proud night to Lindy, too,—the gown which had been promised by Allen had been won and given; and now, for the first time, made its appearance, accompanied by a cap and handkerchief, a present from the bride. But what was still further to her honour, an effort of self-control, undertaken rather as a matter of pride, had been persevered in from better motives: Lindy had become a convert to the new doctrine of Temperance; and, though still reckless and mismanaging, she was in better bodily condition, and in the enjoyment of more comforts than formerly.


At length the appearance of the bridal-loaf—

always a moment of interest and exultation—was announced by an anxious movement of Mrs. Heywood to procure a wider entrance and a clearer circulation for Lindy, who, with sly looks at the young people, presented the mystic cake. White as a glacier, if not quite as large, wreathed with laurel leaves, and crowned with a superb bouquet, it looked, as one of the matrons observed, “almost too good to eat!”—upon which Mrs. Heywood, delighted with the compliment, yet conscious that nothing human was perfect, replied, “If she could only have dressed it with strawberries among the laurel leaves!—but they were so late she was forced to do without them.” The knife lay ready on the salver, and one of the male attendants, looking as wise as if he were of the college of augurs, applied it to the unresisting victim, while the young interrogators of destiny gathered round. The interesting search for the ring commenced, and the prettiest girl in Westdale—always excepting our heroine—was the happy finder,—of course the next bride; from which it may be inferred that the Fates, insensible as they are reported, are not more indifferent to beauty than other folks. And now, the symmetry of the loaf being destroyed, all scruples about its final destination seemed quieted: eaten by some, pocketed by others, the cake soon



disappeared, saving the fraction abstracted with the intention of still further prying into the purposes of destiny in "the dreams of the night." Bustle and business increased, and the bridal ring was called for, that by passing through its magic circle the precious particle thus endued with the power of withdrawing the bolts of the future, might disclose to the believing dreamer his or her allotted partner. Then it was to be enveloped,—now a scissors was demanded—papers were cut, names written, the cake enfolded, and the ends carefully doubled over that no curious eye might dissolve the charm. This done, it was distributed with noisy merriment or mock gravity, and the happy group dispersed,—the young to talk of how well the bride looked! how agreeable was the bridegroom! how pretty were the bridesmaids! and how attentive the groomsmen!—and the graver and more reflecting to predict a reasonable portion of happiness to so well assorted a union. It is proper to mention—as the omission might reflect on his filial character—that Allen insisted on his mother's emigrating to C——; where, in possession of one of the best and pleasantest rooms in his house, and the object of reverence and affection, he made good his youthful promise, that if ever he mounted she should ascend with him. This ar-

rangement was generally approved of by that class of persons who are apt to think nothing quite right till it has received their seal. It was even regarded favourably by the worldly-wise Mrs. Heywood, who, if not equally alive to its propriety, saw its advantages ;—"for," as she argued, "Miss Prescott's rent in Westdale would cost Allen as much as her board under his roof, and then too she had a little something of her own that would now be spent in Allen's family." We must, however, do her the justice to say, that on her first visit to C— these sordid and commonplace considerations were entirely lost sight of in witnessing the sweet influences of such an arrangement. Love's kind and affectionate nature was continually called into exercise, in modes more purely disinterested than the conjugal relation would of itself inspire—yet which failed not of their reward. The delicate attention paid to her mother-in-law, the deferential conformity to her tastes or opinions, even when not entirely in agreement with her own, the reference to her superior skill or care, added new graces to Love in the admiring eyes of her husband ; while the gentle qualities of Mrs. Prescott, her tenderness, her susceptibility to kindness, her wise yet unobtruded counsel, her few wants, and her ready assistance, rendered a connection sometimes fruitful




of uneasiness, in their case only a source of happiness, advantage, and moral improvement. Nor ought we to omit to mention that ingredient in the felicity of our young friends, which was at once its chief beauty and best security. The influence of his father, the precepts of his mother, had early implanted in Allen a religious conviction, confirmed by his own experience, and in its effects corresponding to his character—firm, unostentatious, and practical: and the grateful and flexible nature of Love readily conformed itself to a principle and example which her former mistakes and sufferings had taught her more highly to value.

To so pleasant a state of things within was added prosperity without,—that gradual but certain improvement of their condition, which realized to them the choice of the wise and moderate Hamet—“a little brook which in summer should never be dry, and in winter should never overflow.”

And here, at least, it will probably be considered “suitable and consistent” to close, having brought our narrative to the usual and most approved conclusion; a point at which fear and hope cease, and where of course interest is extinct,—yet we beg a few more parting words. Allen’s political discomfiture will perhaps be remembered, and the small probability that then appeared of his being offered

another opportunity of doing better. But time and chance happen to all, and in due season his growing reputation once more pointed him out as a fit candidate for political distinction. By a common revolution in such affairs, the persons who had, on the former occasion, carried all before them, were now out of favour ; and at the approaching congressional election, the game seemed likely to fall into the hands of those to whom Allen's conduct at that time had served to recommend him,—and his nomination for member of congress accordingly took place. But Allen, always opposed to the false colouring of party, blushed for his friends at the boastful use made of what he considered the only upright and manly course. The same exaggeration that had been formerly resorted to to depreciate him was now used to exalt him ; and electioneering paragraphs appeared in every friendly paper, in which Allen Prescott was pronounced a paragon of disinterestedness and public virtue. But so goes the world—and the part of a virtuous man and good citizen is not to withdraw himself from the contest lest he partake its excess, but rather to endeavour to infuse into it his own better spirit. The attention of Allen was, however, soon transferred from the external conduct of the election to its connection with his more private feelings, when



he found that the candidate on the antagonist ticket was Charles Davenport, settled in a county comprehended in his district. To many persons such an opposition would have been most desirable; nor was Allen without some of the feelings it was calculated to excite. Recollections of contumely and rivalry, his humble origin, the natural cravings for exaltation, gave an intensity to his desire of success even painful. He found himself in a state of mind entirely new; agitated, fearful, resentful, and selfish. But trained in the school of self-control, though human infirmity might for a time get the ascendant, it could not long maintain it.

The election came on—it was warmly contested. Davenport was popular, of unblemished character and respectable talents, and the issue was doubtful, —but Allen had recovered his composure, and could now contemplate a defeat unmoved.

The event has perhaps been anticipated,—Allen got in by what his partisans as usual chose to call “an immense majority;” but the feelings with which he heard of his success fell far short of those excited by the following letter, received a few days subsequently:—

To Allen Prescott, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hope that the surprise with which this communication may be read will be but momentary, for I am unwilling to believe that you would, on reflection, consider me as incapable of conduct which I am confident under similar circumstances would be your own. I am sure that you and I were made to be friends, although by a sort of fatality we seem to be ever moving in opposition. From our first boyish rencounter I have respected you, however from the recklessness of my nature or the arrogance of my youth I may have failed to manifest it ;—and I declare, with entire sincerity, that I would rather have been foiled by you in the late contest than by any other man in the State. If, therefore, having embraced somewhat different opinions, we must continue to act on opposite sides, let it at least be without any personal distrust.

I beg to be presented cordially to my friend Mrs. Prescott, and allow me to subscribe myself

Your sincere friend,

CHS. DAVENPORT.



"He is every inch a gentleman!" exclaimed Mr. Evans, as he returned Allen the letter. Were you and he pitted against each other again, I'd vote for him myself."

Allen accorded more fully in this hearty approbation than he could at the moment express. The generosity of Charles, his own selfish anxieties, the remembrance of youthful intercourse, the frank allusion to their frequent collisions—proving that his conduct had resulted from thoughtlessness or vanity, and not from malignancy—all concurred to affect him. To a fair mind nothing is more gratifying than the rectification of an impression injurious to one of whom we desire to think well; and Allen lost no time in responding to the advances of Davenport.

Here we leave them.—If this little tale has served to show that talents, virtue, success, and even refinement are confined to no condition—that there is, in fact, in our happy country no more favoured class than that which is coerced into the cultivation of all the powers bestowed by Heaven,—that wealth and station do not necessarily corrupt and enervate, nor equality generate license and vulgarity—its end is attained. May we not hope that the advantages proper to our institutions shall be more and more felt as just opinions

shall prevail—that the more Americans are enlightened, the more they will love, assist, and respect each other? We may go even further. Extending our sympathies to all our kind, and anticipating the wide diffusion of Knowledge and Benevolence, we may delight in the prediction of the poet, who, as he has given us our motto, shall also furnish our conclusion :—

“For a’ that and a’ that,
Its comin’ yet for a’ that,
That man to man the world o’er
Shall brothers be for a’ that.”

THE END.



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